

Russia's and the EU's Energy Security Discourses on Central Asia

A Frame Analytical Approach

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Master Thesis in European and American Studies
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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Fall 2011

List of Abbreviations

BOMCA	Border Management Program in Central Asia
CADAP	Central Asian Drug Action Program
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Program
CARICC	Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Center
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EC	European Commission
ES 2020	Energy Strategy up to 2020
ES 2030	Energy Strategy up to 2030
EU	European Union
EURASEC	Eurasian Economic Community
FPC	Foreign Policy Concept
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe
JPR	Joint Progress Report
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Concept
NSS	National Security Strategy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization

TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States Program
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Year: 2011

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Abstract

This thesis examines how Russia and the EU officially look at Central Asia as an energy actor in an energy security political context. Four aspects of the respective parts' energy security discourses are considered; foreign policy, security policy, energy policy and finally energy security, with the aim to examine how Central Asia are framed and presented here. This is done to examine how and why Central Asia is important for Russia and the EU in terms of energy security, and consequently how the parts seek to approach the region. It is argued that not only energy per se is important in the Russian and the EU energy security discourses on Central Asia, and that other factors also needs to be considered when. Among these are cultural aspects and realpolitikal considerations, and also overall political context in which the energy security discourses are situated. This also explains the analytical setup of the thesis.

In line with this, it is argued that Russia and the EU approach Central Asia in very different ways. In the case of Russia, emphasis is placed on Russia's position as a regional great power, as well as the deep cultural bonds that exist between Russia and the Central Asian states. The EU approaches Central Asia with an aim to introduce Western norms in the region, and to assist Central Asia with various technical programs in order to promote development. These framings also spread to the other aspects of the parts' discourses, which in practical terms mean that Russia seeks regional cooperation with the Central Asian states in order to avoid what Moscow considers as foreign interference, whereas The EU wishes to include Central Asia in an expanded EU structure. In essence, it is argued that both parts want to control Central Asia and the region's energy resources, but that this is impossible in practical terms. Thus, they both seek to ingratiate themselves with Central Asia, but with different measures and to means.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Jakub M. Godzimirski for guidance and valuable feedback throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Next, a great deal of thanks should be extended to my mum. Her persistent support throughout this process has been of tremendous help. I do not know what I would have done without it. Thanks also to dad for practical assistance when needed.

A few people have also been so generous so as to devote their time and knowledge to help me improve this thesis. Thanks to Gunhild for proofreading and posing critical questions to parts of the content of the thesis that I did not even think about myself. Stefan should be thanked for helping me see the connections between the parts, and not least for the many lunches at Blindern. Jon Sigurd should be thanked for his encouragements, as well as comments on the thesis.

Needless to say, any errors in the following pages are solely my own responsibility.

Alexander Lande, Oslo November 13th 2011.

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Figure 1: Map of the Central Asian states

Commonwealth of Independent States - Central Asian States



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Theme of the thesis

Energy plays a vital role in ensuring the wellbeing and development of all states. Russia and the EU are no exceptions to this rule. Moscow and Brussels have a long-standing relation in terms of energy. The Soviet Union and subsequently post-Soviet Russia has been, and still is, large-scale energy supplier to Europe. Brussels hoped that after the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia would move in a liberal and Western-like direction, hereby cementing the relationship between the parts. However, as developments unfolded, it was clear that this scenario was unfeasible. There was a growing awareness in Russia of the political power that lay inherent in the country's resource base, which currently makes Russia the world's second largest oil exporter, as well possessing the largest gas reserves in the world (CIA World Fact Book 2011). Furthermore, energy export is crucial for fuelling the Russian economy, comprising over 70 % of the value of Russian export (Solanko 2011; 19). Consequently, Russia sought to ensure its own energy security by keeping its stronghold on the international energy market. In light of this the EU, ever more reliant on energy imports to sustain its economic growth, was reluctant to become too dependent on Russian energy as this implicitly would make Brussels more dependent on Moscow, also in political terms.

This search led to an increased interest in the energy-abundant Central Asia. The region has been present in both Russian and European policy thinking for many years. The "Great Game" of the 19th century, where Russia and Britain struggled for dominance in the region, and Halford Mackinder's "heartland" theory, where the Central Asian space constitutes the pivot area of international geopolitics, serve as examples of just this. At the same time it is clear that the EU and Russia have approached, and still approach, Central Asia differently. In Russia's case, due to the common Soviet heritage and also historical ties that preceded the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries occupy, along with the other former Soviet republics, a special place in Russian thinking. This uniqueness has also been expressed through the concept of "the near abroad", which marks that Russia sees its relations with its neighbors as special and different from those with non-post-Soviet states. Perhaps even more to the point Central Asia is part of what is sometimes referred to as Russia's "geopolitical backyard", which illustrates that Russia sees the region as its own zone of influence.

The countries are also connected energy-wise, as the pipelines constructed during the Soviet era exclusively ran from the energy-abundant Central Asian republics to Russia, thus giving Russia control of Central Asia's energy resources. In light of the Western interests for the region's hydrocarbons, Moscow realized that Central Asia actually could emerge as a potential export competitor to Russia. The EU, on the other hand, has historically only had very limited contact with the region, meaning that a new relationship needed to be build following the demise of the Soviet Union.

Over the past decade Central Asia has emerged as something of a geopolitical hot-spot following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The American presence in the region, coupled with the region's abundant natural energy resources and the area's potential for conflicts, meant that Central Asia almost overnight became a region the major global powers needed to take into account. By controlling the Central Asian region a power would increase its power on at least three fronts; energy, security and economics. Naturally, this also meant that they were required to rethink their stance towards Central Asia, which due to the sudden changes emerged as an even more important region. Thus, the challenge Brussels and Moscow were facing was something of an equivalent to a "battle for hearts and minds"; to convince the leadership in the Central Asian countries that they could be valuable partners. This was even more important in a situation when debate on energy security got a boost, and that some of the Central Asian states could be seen as important also in that energy context. This thesis seeks to examine what role Russia and the EU do assign to Central Asia in their energy security discourses.

1.2. Research questions

This thesis will focus on how Russia and the EU have officially portrayed Central Asia in their energy security discourses. The research question will be answered by a comparative case study, using what we in this thesis will call a *matrëshka model*. The energy security framings will be put in a broader context, with examination of four aspects: the parts' overall foreign policy framing of Central Asia; their security policy framing; their energy policy framing; and finally their energy security framing. This way, we can break the research question down into four sub-questions:

- How is Central Asia depicted in the *overall foreign policy discourse* of Russia and the EU?

- How is Central Asia depicted in the *security policy discourse* of Russia and the EU?
- How is Central Asia depicted in the *energy policy discourse* of Russia and the EU?
- How is Central Asia depicted in the *energy security discourse* of Russia and the EU?

Central Asia is in this thesis taken to mean Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It should also be clarified that what is meant by energy in the following pages is fossil fuels, i.e. oil and gas. This is due to the fact that it is these two energy sources that are the most relevant in terms of imports to Europe from both Russia and Central Asia.

1.3. Contributions of the thesis

The primary contribution of this thesis is to provide new knowledge regarding official Russian and EU understandings of Central Asia from an energy security perspective in the first two years of Dmitry Medvedev's term as president of Russia. Moreover, the thesis seeks to highlight the importance of energy security in that regional context. Previous studies have focused on possible consequences of policies as they are outlined in the official documents and discourses, but relatively little attention has been paid to studying how actors are framed within the same discourses. Another point that can be made here is that we also examine aspects that are not directly linked to energy per se, but that nonetheless are vital in ensuring energy security. This way, this thesis serves as an argument for examining the full width of the energy security debate. Related to this, we here also take the parts' historical relationships with Central Asia into consideration, and argue that also culture should be included in order to gain a complete understanding of energy security. Hence, by comparing the perspectives of these two major energy actors, this thesis hopefully may add some more nuances into the actors' own understanding of the energy security.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 aims to outline and explain the theoretical and methodological approach that will be employed throughout the thesis. The main concepts that will be focused on are discourse, discourse analysis, frame analysis and of course energy security. In chapter 3 and 4 we examine the Russian and EU energy security discourse on Central Asia. The chapters are built up in a similar manner: First, we take a step back and account for the historical development of Russia's and the EU's relations with Central Asia.

In accordance with our conceptualization of energy security, of special importance here is more overarching foreign relations and Central Asia's position herein, security issues and matters related to energy. This will enable us to contextualize the energy security discourses from 2008 to 2010, and thus also to serve as a background for the analysis of the respective parts' energy security discourses on Central Asia. Next, the following subchapters deal with the respective parts' foreign policy framing; their security policy framing and their energy policy framing. The last subchapter of both chapters concern Central Asia's role in the energy security understanding of both parts. Here, we first examine major themes and projects related to the parts' more general understanding of energy security, before we move on to see how these relate to Central Asia.

Chapter 5 will sum up the findings of chapter 3 and 4. We will here also discuss the nature of the "energy game" in Central Asia, and examine whether this should be understood as matter of cooperation, competition or confrontation.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

2.1. Introductory remarks

The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical and methodological framework that will be applied throughout this thesis. The structure of this chapter is inspired by the idea that that discourse analytical approaches are combinations of theoretical and methodological elements that together constitutes a whole (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999; 12). This is also the reason why theoretical and methodological considerations are assessed in the same chapter, rather than being examined separately. We will start by examining the main theoretical concepts that will be used in the following pages. This thesis can best be described as a case study, in which discourse analysis is used in order to examine how Central Asia is being framed in the EU and Russian discourses on foreign policy, security, energy and energy security. The chapter discusses the key theoretical and methodological issues relevant for the thesis, as well as conceptualizes and operationalizes the concept of *energy security*. We will here also present the *matrëshka model*, which is the analytical setup used in the thesis. Next, we will then look at how the thesis was carried out in praxis, discuss possible sources of error and the validity and reliability of the study, before the chapter will be concluded by looking at previous research relevant for the thesis.

2.2. Case study defined

John Gerring defines of a *case* as a “spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time” (Gerring 2007: 19). A *case study* is here understood as the study of the properties of the phenomenon in question. As this thesis is comprised of a comparison of how Russia and the EU respectively portray Central Asia in their official energy security discourses in the period 2008-2010, the phenomena, or units of analysis, are the depictions of Central Asia in the Russian and the EU discourses.

2.3. Comparing cases

Guy E. Swanson states that “thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research” (Swanson 1971; 145, cited in Ragin 1989; 1). The comparative method may be understood as an approach based on comparisons between, and analyses of, observed phenomena within a defined area of analysis

(Store Danske Encyklopædi 2009). By allowing a feature-by-feature comparison of cases, comparative research enables us to investigate “the similarities, differences, and associations between entities” (Mills 2008). In this respect this thesis contains a synchronic comparative element, in the sense that we will examine and compare the similarities and differences in Russia’s and the EU’s energy security discourses on Central Asia. This will make it possible to identify how these actors perceive Central Asia in relation to this concept.

2.4. Defining the case study approach: Interpretative case study

Charles Ragin argues that an advantage of the case study approach is the emphasis on understanding complexity of a subject matter rather than attempting to generalize:

In the case-oriented approaches (...) it is clear that the goal of appreciating complexity is given precedence over the goal of achieving generality (...) The case-oriented approach uses theory to aid historical interpretation and to guide the identification of important causal factors; the variable-oriented strategy, by contrast usually tests hypotheses derived from theory (Ragin 1987; 54).

Hence, case studies are not seen as the best vehicles for providing generalized theories that can be applied over a range of scientific fields. We are therefore dealing with what can be called non-general knowledge. Understanding the internal dynamics involved in a particular case is therefore given precedence over external generalizations. This is, however, not to say that case studies are without value. Arend Lijphart has argued that “case studies can make an important contribution to the establishment of general propositions and thus to theory building in political science” (1971; 691). Lijphart goes on to outline six different case study “ideal types”¹ (ibid; 691), one of which is the *interpretative case study* which will be used in this thesis².

An interpretative case study approach may be selected in instances where there is “an interest in the case rather than an interest in the formulation of general theory” (ibid; 691)³. A

¹ The remaining five types of case studies outlined by Lijphart include atheoretical case studies; theory-confirming case studies; theory-infirming case studies; hypothesis-generating case studies and deviant case studies.

² This is not to say that this thesis *exclusively* relies on this approach; Lijphart himself stated that the types merely represent ideals. In practical terms an exclusive focus on only one approach in a study may be deemed impractical or even outright inadequate for studying the object at hand.

³ This characteristic the interpretative approach shares with the atheoretical approach, thus underlining the point made by Lijphart about the futility of searching for an exclusive ideal type approach.

generalization is here applied to a specific case “with the aim of throwing light on the case rather than of improving the generalization in any way” (ibid; 692). By allowing empirical theory related to a specific case to be interpreted and analyzed due to its particular characteristics, the approach carries a value on its own. The emphasis in this thesis is on the respective parts’ official discourses and the portrayals that lie herein of Central Asia. As these are not objectively given facts, an interpretive approach is suitable.

2.5. Discourse analysis: Theoretical preliminaries

2.5.1. Defining discourse

A discourse can be understood as a way of talking about and understanding the world (or a section of the world) (Jørgensen & Phillips; 8). The way we speak of the world around us does not simply reflect the world in a neutral and unbiased manner, but constructs the world in a particular way (ibid; 8)⁴. In accordance with this, systems of meaning are contingent, as the social world is in a constant state of flux. Language is here seen as more than just a channel for the communication of information or facts; it is also various practices and understandings that are manifested in what we perceive as social reality. Humans, through speech and writing, construct a particular view of the world at a given point in time, which in turn is acted upon through interaction with others.

This in turn introduces power into the equation, as the ability to affect what is to be considered knowledge can influence social practices on a large scale. Taking this into consideration, Phillips and Hardy summarize discourse more narrowly, defining it as “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception that brings an object into being” (Phillips & Hardy 2002; 3). Social reality is seen as a construction that is made real through discourses, “and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (ibid; 3).

There is a dialogical relationship between the social world and the language we use to describe this. Accordingly, any attempt to create a clear-cut division between reality and

⁴ Iver B. Neumann has inferred that because of the dynamic nature of the social world where everything is constantly in flux, discourse analyses are primarily concerned with epistemological issues, understood as the origin, nature, methods, validity, and limits of human knowledge, rather than ontological ones, that deals with the nature of social entities (Neumann 2001; 14).

discourse is futile, as the discourse we use at any given time is adapted in order to fit our surroundings. For this reason, humans have access to *a reality*, not *the reality*. This way, discourse analyses are based upon the acceptance of a division between reality understood as *physical reality* and reality understood as *social representation*. The goal of a discourse analysis is therefore to shed new light on the premises that are always parts of political and social practices (Neumann 2001; 15).

2.5.2. Basic discourse analytical assumptions

Gill has outlined four themes that have a prominent position within the discourse analytical paradigm: *discourse as a topic*; *language is constructive*; *discourse as a form of action* and finally *discourse as being rhetorically organized* (Gill 2000; 141-143, Bryman 2004; 371). These themes will be further explained below, with reference to how these can be related to this thesis.

First, Gill states that discourse *per se* is a topic. Accordingly, discourse must be seen as the focus of enquiry itself, and not as a gateway to some social reality that lies behind the discourse. Discourse analyses are therefore related to investigating the “content and organization of talk and texts” (Gill; 141), making language and emerging patterns in the texts analyzed the main focus of investigation. In relation to this thesis this means that the aim is not to find out what the players *really* mean about Central Asia, but rather how the language employed to describe and discuss Central Asia creates a specific understanding of the region. The discourse analysis aims to uncover these language mechanisms.

Second, Gill notes the constructive nature of discourses. This means that a particular version of social reality is constructed through the use of discourses. Throughout this process, choices are made regarding how this view is most appropriately presented, which in turn reflect the “disposition of the person responsible for devising it” (Bryman 2004; 371). Related to this thesis, we here see that among all the possible representations that can be used to depict Central Asia, a few are chosen and highlighted, attempting to present the truth according to the players. Our goal here is therefore to examine which representations that are chosen.

Thirdly, discourse is regarded as a social practice, in that it is “action oriented” (Gill; 142). People employ language in order to carry out certain acts (presenting a case from a specific point of view, attributing blame, etc.), which underscores that discourses interact with the

context in which they are being used, and must be interpreted in relation to this context. By recognizing the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge this also means that a given action must be endowed with meaning by being placed in a cultural or conceptual context (Burr 1995; 6; Matz 2001; 69). Accordingly, the respective Russian and EU energy security discourses must be seen as mirroring specific understandings of the world at the time they were constructed. The goal of the discourse analysis is therefore to examine the interaction between the discourse and the context within which the discourse takes place, which in turn justifies these portrayals from the respective parts' point of view.

Finally, Gill sees discourses as being rhetorically organized, where the aim is to establish a particular version of the world. This happens in competition with other discourses that aim to achieve the same, in a form of bargaining game. The successfulness of a particular discourse must be considered in terms of the backing and acceptance a discourse gets, which enables it to establish and present its particular version of the "truth" at a given point in time. By addressing the rhetorical nature that is intrinsic in texts, we can see how discourses are organized in order to present themselves as viable alternatives. This thesis will not address the bargaining game as such, as the focus here is on the established official discourses. The point here is rather to examine which depictions that are constructed of Central Asia *within* the official discourses; this way attempting to establish an overall and complete portrait of the region within the official discourse.

2.6. Narrowing down: Framing and frame analysis⁵.

Frames⁶ can be understood as cognitive models through which people interpret the world and organize experiences. Our thoughts and understandings of the world are being guided by frames, in the sense that certain features of social life are highlighted while others are neglected or downplayed. Reality is being filtered and simplified, and we interpret input from the world through already established frames, constructed through selection and salience (Jensen 2009; 3). This way, frames provide us with a background or point of reference when we are faced with new experiences, as understanding a situation can be seen as a process of

⁵ This is not to say that a frame analytic approach is necessarily synonymous with a discourse analytical approach. Frame analysis is a multi-disciplinary research method that can take on a number of various practices. See Fisher (1997) for an extensive overview.

⁶ Frames are often also referred to as cognitive structures or mental schemas.

comparison and matching the present situation with the pre-existing frames stored in the mind.

How an issue is framed have direct implications for how we do relate to it. This way, frames also mediate the rules for human cognition and communication. By using a specific frame, a specific problem definition is promoted, along with a particular interpretation of coherence, moral evaluation and (or) a problem solution (Entman 1993; 52; Ihlen 2007; 10). This shows the political power that lies in frames, as they work as imprints of power by registering the identity of actors or interests that have competed to dominate a text (Entman; 55). Hence, frames should not be seen only as a mechanism explaining the construction of political issues; framing is *per se* policy-making as players use frames in order to constitute an issue as a political one, and themselves as political subjects. The point here is not that frames *are* being used, as everybody employs frames to express their points of view. Rather, what is to be emphasized is that these frames are *social constructions* that promote certain interpretations and representations, whilst rejecting others (Ihlen 2007; 10).

It is of vital importance to endow discourses with a sense of rationality, consistency, legitimacy, etc. if a particular discourse is to become dominant and hereby powerful. Frames help discourses achieve this as they enable *narrative fidelity* and *empirical credibility*, understood respectively as the congruence of a frame with the life experience of its addressees and the fit between a frame and what is perceived as real world events (d'Anjou 1996; 56, and Gamson & Modigliani 1989; 5, both cited in Koenig 2005a). In order to receive backing for a proposed definition of a problem, a player must formulate this in a rhetorical, political language that makes sense on the collective level (Matz; 71). Related to political matters – and hence this thesis – it is important that the policy makers understand the situation in which they act.

Accordingly, the Russian and EU leadership respectively need to agree on how Central Asia should be presented and represented, in order to construct a consistent stance. Hence, the frames presented in this thesis are seen as collectively held and socially shared in Russia and the EU respectively. In relation to this thesis, the overall goal in the creation of an official discourse on Central Asia must therefore be seen to be to combine and intertwine two processes: frame problems and issues related to energy security and Central Asia so that they are in accordance with what can be called national interests and understandings, and at the same time present the frames that have been decided upon in a way that they may be deemed

legitimate and understandable by the public. Based on this, we can discern that the frames within which Central Asia is placed in the parts' energy security discourses should be based on collectively held pre-established and accepted depictions of the region. This underlines the links between culture and meaning, which in turn illustrates that the Russian and EU discourses and consequent framings of Central Asia are distinct and unique; underpinned by separate logics. Hence, the aim of frame analysis is to "identify the framing and reasoning devices and to relate them to a condensing symbol, which is part of a shared culture" (Van Gorp 2010; 92). We will in the following outline the approach that will be used to achieve this. Before doing this, we shall first examine the concept of energy security.

2.7. Understanding and operationalizing energy security

The World Economic Forum (WEC) and Cambridge Energy Associates (CERA) have conceptualized energy security as an umbrella concept that covers various aspects linked to energy, economic growth and political power (WEF/CERA; 9). As the goal in this thesis is to examine framings of Central Asia, this conceptualization is useful as it equips us with a framework within which to elaborate the concept of energy security that still allows for more narrow operationalizations according to the scope of investigation.

Actors in different links of the energy chain have different stakes in the field of energy security and consequently also attach different interests to the concept. An energy producer (exporter) understands energy security differently than an energy consumer (importer), and transit countries may approach the matter in a different way than the two previously mentioned parts⁷ (Godzimirski 2009; 174). Elena Shadrina has aptly noted that "producers/exporters and consumers/importers of energy resources may operate by the same – volume, price, and continuity – categories, but the parameters paid attention to are different; the two sides emphasize their interests and formulate their concerns differently" (Shadrina 2010; 29).

This can be exemplified by considering that both producers and consumers of energy are interested in stable markets and predictable prices, but there is also a fundamental conflict of

⁷ As a fourth category we may also include the energy industry, whose priorities may differ from that of a government. This category is in some instances somewhat shady, especially in Russia's case, where a large portion of the energy industry is controlled by the Kremlin, thus operating with an aim to promote national interests. However, as this thesis' focus is on the governmental, in the EU's case perhaps even supra-governmental, niveau of policy formulation, this category has not been considered.

interests between the parts over control of activities and market, as well as over such concerns as prices, taxes and division of profits. Exporters argue between themselves over long-term strategies, prices and market shares, whereas importers have conflicting views on access supplies and positioning in the exporting countries (Noreng 2009; 207-208, 217). Adding even more complexity to this, some actors may occupy several positions in the energy structure simultaneously. A relevant example in this thesis is Russia, that on one hand is a major global energy producer, but on the other also serves as a transit country for energy from Central Asia and also as a buyer of gas from the region in order to meet Russian commitments both in Russia and abroad (Godzimirski; 174). Consequently, actor identities and interests are not necessarily clear-cut or uniform, which requires the actors to weigh its interests against one another in order to appear with a comprehensible and consistent strategy.

Studies of energy security have traditionally been divided into two distinct schools; one arguing for a market analytical approach to the subject matter, hereby stressing a focus on economy, market mechanisms and liberalism. The other has emphasized geopolitics, i.e. realistic power politics (Nakamura 2002; 12-17). This also implies that these two principal classes also follow different logics regarding their viewings of energy. The former sees energy as a market-oriented concept and an internationally tradable good, while the latter views energy through a geopolitical lens, meaning that energy emerges as a strategic good (Shadrina; 28). In the prolongation of this argument it can be assumed that international energy relations are in a constant and intrinsic tension between cooperation and conflict (ibid; 28). At the heart of these categories is the issue of competition over different energy-related aspects⁸.

This means that the parts in the energy chain must choose its strategy to ensure energy security from its position in the energy chain. Confrontation assumes a position of strength and an ability to dominate the counterpart militarily, whereas cooperation suggests reciprocity and interdependence between the parts (Noreng; 217). These categories are naturally not mutually exclusive: states can and indeed do bring both categories into consideration when deciding upon an energy security strategy. Furthermore, it ought to be emphasized that the scenarios for interaction above are merely ideal types, and that international energy relations

⁸ These dynamics will be discussed in chapter 5, with relation to how these pertain to Central Asia.

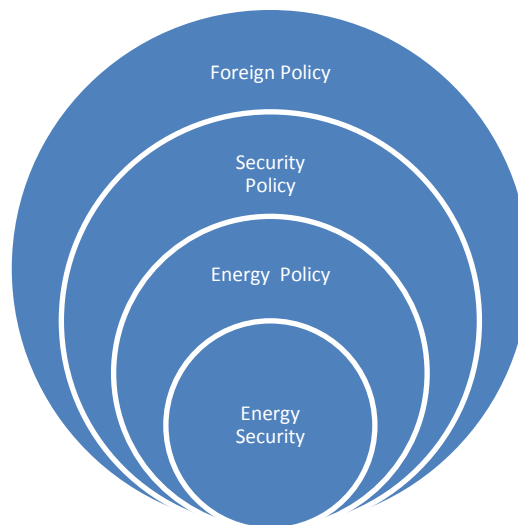
in praxis mostly lie somewhere between these⁹. Rather, the point that should be made in relation to this thesis is that regardless of which of the abovementioned foci is dominant, energy security “inescapably rises as a pivotal issue of (global) energy governance and international relations (at large)” (Shadrina; 28). Therefore, due to the multifaceted character of the concept of energy security, it can be examined from various angles, and consequently operationalized according to different criteria. In this thesis we will be examining the Russian and energy security discourses according to a *matrëshka* model consisting of three “layers”; foreign policy, security policy and finally energy policy.

The rationale for this approach is that in order to understand the role Central Asia plays in an energy security political context we also need to consider the way in which the region is depicted in a larger and more general context. Consistent with this, we also need to take into account the political, geopolitical and security political motives and considerations of Russia and the EU. Due to just this, the following pages will not solely concern “pure” energy considerations, but also other issues and challenges that were relevant in the parts’ relationships with Central Asia. This also means that we need to take into account the identity of the actors more broadly, as well as cultural relations between the parts. Hence, it is here argued that there is a close relationship between the actors’ understandings of goals and instruments in energy security and their foreign, security and energy policies¹⁰. This is of perhaps especially pertinent in the case of Russia, which has long-standing historical relations with the Central Asian states. This may have led to a culturally-based cementation of attitudes and perceptions vis-à-vis the Central Asian states, in other words what is sometimes referred to as implicit knowledge. Hence, by examining the energy security according to the thesis’ analytical setup, it is here suggested that energy security indeed contains a cultural component.

⁹ How this pertains to this thesis will be addressed in Chapter 5.

¹⁰ An apt illustration of just this point can be seen in the EU’s Energy Strategy until 2020, where it is stated that “energy security is closely intertwined with EU’s foreign and security priorities. Diversification of fuels, sources of supply and transit routes is essential for EU security as are good governance, respect for the rule of law and protection of EU and foreign investments in energy producing and transit countries” (EC 2010c).

Figure 2: Graphical Outline of the Matrëshka Model



Before moving, a remark should be made about the thesis' analytical distinction. More specifically, this relates to the division between energy policy and energy security. Given that both categories deal with energy related matters, it is unavoidable that there are overlapping elements¹¹. However, it is here contended that the examined actors' understanding of energy security serves as a basis for their energy policy more generally. In turn, given energy policy's centrality in the formulation of foreign policy in general, we here argue that there are spill-over effects from energy security that influence other political levels than merely energy related issues. Moreover, energy policy is of course linked to many aspects and is thus more than just energy security. However, as the focus the of this thesis is the energy security discourses of Russia and the EU, the energy policy section is construed in such a way as to illustrate how the energy policy is framed in order to enhance the parts' energy security situation.

2.8. Frame analysis applied

This thesis will be based on a qualitative approach to the identification of frames. More specifically, we will in the following employ an *interpretative approach* through a *narrative analysis of texts* which will help us identify the frames used to portray Central Asia. This means analyzing texts as narrative stories, and examine their construction, structure, plot and

¹¹ How this was dealt with in practical terms will be discussed in section 2.8.

character. Silverman (2006; 166) has identified the following questions as useful to answer in a narrative analysis:

- What is the content of the examined story?
- Who are the principal agents?
- How is the story told (structure and sequence)?
- What purposes does the story serve (functions)?
- In what place or setting is the story told (context)?
- Does the story have a clear culmination with a moral, as in a fairytale, or does it follow a different pattern (issues of genre)?

Drawing on Silverman's questions, the objective throughout the analysis process is to examine how a comprehensive and coherent portrayal of Central Asia emerged, rather than examining the various questions separately. This is not to say that the following analysis does not answer some of these questions specifically at some points; the point is rather that this is done in order to highlight the construction of a holistic presentation of Central Asia in accordance with the examined themes and "layers"¹². Hence, Silverman's questions served as guidelines rather than a strict methodological outline.

In practical terms, the following was done to approach the subject matter. First, official texts, statements, speeches etc. were read and categorized thematically according to their relevance to the four "layers" in the *matrëshka-model*. The main selection criterion here was explicit or implicit references to Central Asia in the context of the categories chosen for analysis, i.e. the layers. Consequentially, texts that did not fit the analytical scheme were omitted from the base of texts that were to be analyzed further. As to the texts that were kept on, it was obvious that different aspects needed to be searched for in the different layers. In terms of the foreign policy layer, documents and texts were searched for more overarching frames and themes regarding the parts' general perception of Central Asia. The security policy framing was built

¹² It should here also be pointed out that some linguistic features were examined, albeit to a rather modest degree. Drawing on Thomas Koenig's (2005b and 2006) exemplification of heuristic framing devices, suffice it here to mention that constructions of collectivization were assessed by looking for deictics, more specifically personal pronouns. Particularizations and generalizations were seen by examining synecdoches, also known as "collective singulars", that are used to explain the actions of a person or persons by referring to his or her attributes, such as for instance nationality. These devices were used to support and substantiate the already-constructed frames rather than assisting in the actual construction of these.

up by examining the threats and dangers the parts associated with the region, what depictions the parts had of Central Asia in light of these threats, and how the parts sought to overcome these problems. The parts' energy policy framing was examined by looking at the role of Central Asia in the parts' energy outlook, and how the parts sought to approach the region in light of these outlooks. Lastly, the energy security aspect was examined by examining the major themes in the parts' discourse on this topic, and how Central Asia would help the parts in overcoming the challenges the parts faced.

Next, an important point was to identify emerging framing patterns of Central Asia as a result of the respective official discourses' portrayal of the region. This is what often is mentioned as *master frames*¹³ or *meta-narratives*. These are ideational models that are highly culturally resonant and inter-subjective within a given society, and serve as starting points for how something, in our case Central Asia, can be addressed within a given society. The logical place to find the master frames was in the parts' overall foreign political assessment of Central Asia, the first step of the analysis, as this obviously serves as a fundament for how to understand Central Asia more generally from the respective parts' point of view. The master frames are "custom-made" and were identified on the basis of recurring narrative features in the official discourse, which in turn places restrictions on how Central Asia could be understood from the parts' perspectives. Having identified these, the thesis' presupposition is that the identified master frames would "move downwards" when moving from general considerations to more particular ones, which also affecting how the parts mentioned and related to Central Asia in the spheres of security, energy and energy security. Hence, although the different layers are examined taking their internal logic into consideration, it has also been an objective throughout the thesis to show how a constructed stance carries certain implications throughout the whole discursive "chain".

Before moving on, a few remarks should be made about the analytical scheme and the practical methodology employed. First, it should here be pointed out that the layers do not constitute watertight bulkheads, meaning that issues may be intertwined or overlapping. This is perhaps especially pertinent in the distinction between energy policy and energy security. To overcome this challenge during the categorization and analysis of the texts related to these

¹³ An oft-cited definition of the term has been worked out by Snow and Benford who states that master frames are "modes of punctuation, attribution, and articulation", but their punctuations, attributions, and articulations may color and constrain [the collective action frames of] any number of movement organizations"(Snow and Benford 1992; 138).

two themes, a practical distinction was introduced: when the discourse referred to “energy” or “energy policy” these were placed in the energy policy category, whereas instances where “energy security” was discussed were placed in the energy security category. Another aspect related to the selection criterion outlined above concerns the actual descriptions of Central Asia. As the thesis’ topic is the parts’ *Central Asian* discourses, descriptions of multilateral relations have been preferred over bilateral relations. In other words, descriptions of Central Asia¹⁴ as a region have mostly been given precedence over descriptions of Russia’s or the EU’s bilateral relations with the separate countries in the region.

As to the empirical research, official strategies and documents were taken as the main points of departure, which means that these will be referred to relatively frequently throughout the thesis. As some of these documents officially have rather long names and may be published by different official agencies, we will for the sake of simplicity refer to abbreviations of these documents when citing these. However, in order to make the thesis as transparent as possible, the documents will when introduced be accompanied by a footnote that shows the location of the document in the bibliography.

It should also be noted that this has not been a strict methodological guideline throughout the thesis. Due to the thesis’ scope and the research questions posed, some of the Central Asian countries are considered to be more pertinent in investigating the subject matter at hand than others. Of special importance here is Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which are the two most energy-abundant states in the region. Given that the thesis also examines energy related issues, these countries occupy a somewhat special position in the parts’ framings, and thus also in this thesis. Therefore, although Central Asia in the following pages *mainly* is treated as a whole, reference will, when fitting, be made to these countries as well.

2.9. Identifying possible sources of error

First, we only examine limited period of time, namely the period from 2008 to 2010. As with politics in general, energy security is a dynamic field where rapid developments occur. Because of this, the temporal limitation may be a challenge, in the sense that the analytical setup may be unable to pick up more recent currents and trends of the political climate. In order to remedy this, reference will also be made to pertinent developments that have

¹⁴ In Russia’s case this also includes coverage of the CIS, in which the Central Asian states, with the exception of Turkmenistan which has not ratified the commonwealth’s charter, are members.

occurred in 2011. Second, the focus here is mainly the discursive aspect of the official outlooks, meaning that the thesis for the most part does not examine how the parts' policies are pursued in practice. This could be a potential source of error, as discrepancies might very well occur between rhetoric and what is done in real life.

Moving on, it is unavoidable that a thesis such as this one aims at highlighting a generalized or stereotypical depiction of the object studied, in this case Central Asia. As the goal is to present main tendencies in the discourse, variations in depictions are not necessarily picked up, which in turn may lead the author to add more fuel to an already established depiction. In relation to this point, it should also be noted that frames are not static, but are continuously altered in the dialogical interplay between the social world and the language humans employ to describe this. Moreover, it is clear that the Russo-Central Asian and EU-Central Asian relations do not arise in a vacuum or as isolated cases; they are part of a continuum where other actors, most notably China, also are present. In relation to this it ought also to be mentioned that the Central Asian states' own views on both their relationships with Russia and the EU and the energy security situation in the region are not analysed in this thesis.

As to the theoretical approach, there is some fuzziness regarding the conceptualizations of the theoretical concepts used in the thesis. This has led some theoreticians to separate between frame and discourse studies¹⁵. This thesis does not attempt to serve as a theoretical defence for the bridging of these two directions. Rather, it is here contended that frames emerges as discursive constructions, meaning that framings can be detected by scrutinizing the discourses. As was also mentioned above frame analysis is a multi-disciplinary approach, and discourse analysis is accordingly just one of several possible angles of approach.

Next, we need to examine the validity of the research. We may here distinguish between *external* and *internal validity*. High external validity is achieved when the findings of the study can be applied or transferred outside its own setting, whereas a study achieves high internal validity when the findings are valid for the sample studied. As this thesis is dealing with the energy security discourses of Russia and the EU, it can be said to have a high internal validity for the samples studied, but a low external validity as the thesis' findings cannot be applied to the energy security discourses of other actors.

¹⁵ See Johnston (2002) for an elaboration of this.

In relation to the validity of the thesis we should also mention the role of the researcher. To which degree a project has been influenced by its researcher is of course intrinsically difficult to assess. Rather, what should be emphasized here is that the researcher must adopt what Stephanie Taylor has called a “policy of openness” (Taylor; 19). By positioning her or himself in relation to what is being studied, the researcher shows hers or his contextual and interpretive point of departure. Therefore, I will in the following briefly outline how my position may affect this thesis. I am a student of Russian area studies, which may lead to a “knowledge bias” towards the Russian stance. Moreover, seeing as Norway is not an EU member I might be considered what Van Gorp has termed a “relative outsider”, in the sense that I am not a citizen of either of the examined subjects (Van Gorp; 94). However, I am familiar with both a European context through my upbringing, and a Russian one through my studies.

As to the reliability of the study, a qualitative approach such as this one is based on data reduction to compress the material analyzed into more general categories, i.e. the various frames and framings. Michael T. Maher states that due to the theoretically demanding character of the concept of framing, it has proved to be an elusive concept to measure (Maher 2001; 84). This is also the case in relation to this thesis, as the depictions of Central Asia were categorized into overarching themes on the basis of an interpretative and subjective approach, rather than on the basis of an established methodology. As both the selection and analysis of texts are based on the judgment of the researcher the reliability of the study may be an issue, as other researchers may assign the selected texts to different categories, or construe new categories altogether. Hence, there is risk that analytical creativity could be translated into analytical arbitrariness (ibid; 84). Summing up the last four paragraphs, it is fitting to quote Hank Johnston, who notes that “because textual data come contextually embedded and are often gathered in ways that offers insights into their interpretation that are often lost in survey techniques, qualitative analysis offers higher validity of the findings but less reliability” (Johnston 2002; 69).

2.10. Previous studies and research

This thesis touches upon a number of different research directions and traditions. Perovic and Orttung (2010) provide a concise account of the various aspects involved in energy security thinking, and also illustrate the change and continuity in the conceptualizations of energy

security. Noreng (2009) discusses conflict, confrontation and cooperation as different strategies for achieving energy security. Locatelli (2010) examines the stakes involved for the EU in supplying the Union with gas from both Russia and the Caspian region at large. Øverland, Kendall-Taylor and Kjærnet (eds.; 2010) address both how petroleum wealth has affected the Caspian States domestically, and the relationships between the Caspian states and Russia and China. Warkotsch (ed.; 2011) covers a variety of issues connected to the EU's engagement in Central Asia. Shadrina (2010) examines Russian foreign energy policy on three fronts: towards the EU; towards Central Eurasia; and towards Northeast Asia. Anker et al (2010) discuss the development of the Caspian Sea region towards 2025, hereunder also the role of the region's energy resources.

Chapter 3: Central Asia in the Russian Discourse on Energy Security

3.1. Contextualizing the Russo-Central Asian relationship

Introduction

The demise of the Soviet Union meant that Russia needed to reconstruct its discourse in order to better fit the post-Soviet reality. Borrowing Johan Matz' phrase, it was here a matter of "framing a new reality with an old language" (Matz 2001; 95). As Russian perceptions of political realities have changed, so have the stances taken towards Central Asia. This section aims to provide a contextualization for these stances. Paramonov and Stokov (2008) identify three stages in the evolvement of post-Soviet Russia's policy on Central Asia; 1992 to 1995; 1996 to 1999 and 2000 to 2008¹⁶. We will in the following employ this division to provide an overview of Russia's policies and views of Central Asia. This will make it possible to contextualize the Russian energy security discourse from 2008 to 2010, and will further give a broader understanding of how Central Asia has been perceived and approached by Moscow.

First stage (1992-1995)

The early 1990s saw Russia in political disarray. The Russian leadership had for the time being excluded any ambitions of retaining its former international status, and focused primarily on legitimizing and consolidating domestic power. Moreover, Moscow sought to transform Russia into a Western-like democratic and capitalist country. From the outlook of the then-liberal Moscow Central Asia did not fit well into this scheme, as the region was seen as an obstacle to Russia's modernization (Paramonov & Stokov 2008; 3). Consequentially, this meant implementing a policy of isolationism from Central Asia. Russia considered Central Asia to be geographically too remote for Western impact, which led Moscow to treat the region "more as an extension of internal affairs than as external affairs" (Perovic 2005; 62). This way, Moscow conveyed the message that the "near abroad" could be left alone until the Kremlin decided otherwise.

¹⁶ In order to allow a better overview of Vladimir Putin's presidency, the third stage that deals with just this has been divided in two, which looks at each of the periods of Putin's reign.

Russia was still keen to maintain its geopolitical “sphere of interest”, meaning that Moscow still wanted the role as security guarantor for the region as well as being the main promoter for economic cooperation (Jonson 2006; 9). To this effect, and in addition to infuse Russian influence directly, Moscow promoted the *Commonwealth of Independent (CIS)*. Established in 1991, its main aim was to bring about a “peaceful divorce” between the former Soviet republics and to provide a vehicle for coordination within such spheres as trade, finance and security. However, Russia’s lack of ability to project its power meant that Moscow had to match available resources against political aspirations and priorities. Thus, instead of influencing the region through active policies, Russia tried to control Central Asia by hindering potential competitors from entering the region. This way, the Russian sway was kept by maintaining status quo. Cooperation was desirable as long as Russia was in charge; otherwise Russia would follow a policy of obstruction. The inconsistency of the Russian practice can here be illustrated, as Central Asia was framed as a geopolitical asset *and* a burden at the same time. This, in turn, reflected the Russian view of Central Asia as part of Moscow’s geopolitical back alley, and that Russia was in charge.

Second stage (1996-1999)

The appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as Russian foreign minister signaled the end of the liberal Western orientation in Russian policy. Wishing to enhance Russia’s position in global affairs, Primakov launched the concept of *multipolarity* (ibid; 7, Tsygankov 2010; 19). In practical terms, this signaled the promotion of Russia as an independent center of power, which also meant a halt in the integration with the Euro-Atlantic community (Paramonov & Strokov; 7). In this sense Primakov’s approach also contained an *Eurasianist*¹⁷ element, as it promoted the enhancement of Russian geopolitical influence and power in the post-Soviet space, Central Asia included.

During this period Russia’s awareness of Central Asia’s importance was increased, especially in terms of security. This was spurred by such events as the outbreak of the first Chechen war in 1994, the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan and also the plans to enlarge NATO into the post-

¹⁷ De Lazari provides us with a clear definition Eurasianism, stating that it is “one of the trends in Russian anti-Westernism, justifying the reasons for which the West and Russia cannot be unified ideologically. According to this concept, Russia is neither Europe, nor Asia, but a continent in its own right: Eurasia” (De Lazari 1999; 171).

Soviet space (ibid; 7, Rutland 2003; 30, Perovic; 62, Tsygankov; 112)¹⁸. As noted above, Russia saw itself as the exclusive guarantor of Central Asia's security. In turn, this meant that any advancement made by foreign powers into the area was deemed incompatible with Russian interests (Perovic; 62). This may explain why Russia in this period sought closer relationships with the Central Asian on several fronts: on security and military matters as well as economic and socio-political cooperation. This way, Moscow attempted to revive the interdependent coherence of the former union without evoking any political neo-imperialist notions (Tsygankov; 114).

By addressing these issues, Moscow tried to “embrace and to cautiously promote the idea of Eurasianism as a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious community in the place of the former Soviet Union” (ibid; 120). Jos Boonstra writes that this change in Russian policy also was a reaction to the Central Asian efforts to look for new political partners, which, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, was motivated by the lack of Russian interest in the region (Boonstra 2008; 70). Moscow realized that a policy of obstruction left the Central Asian states with no choice but to seek alliances elsewhere. By adopting a policy of cooperation Russian authorities were more able to control the unfolding of events (Perovic; 64).

Still, it should not be forgotten that the overall aim was to increase Russian influence and power, making geopolitical considerations more important. In practical terms, the Russian influence was boosted through the improvement of cooperation on defense issues and, of special relevance to this thesis, the fact that the Soviet-era energy pipelines flowed from the south to the north, thus effectively giving Russia a monopoly on energy transport from Central Asia. Hence, energy was a means to maintain Russian influence. Russian perceptions of Central Asia in this period therefore seem as a twofold image: Partially based on an image of Central Asia as a region dependent on Russia for its development, and partially based in a belief that Central Asia needed Russian “nourishment” if this dependency were to last. Despite the lack of tangible achieved results, this period clearly highlights a resurgence of Central Asia in Russian politics.

¹⁸ This is not to say that the model presented by Primakov necessarily implied a confrontational stance towards the West. Although Russia remained skeptical of NATO's activities, Primakov believed that pragmatic cooperation on areas important for both parts were useful (Tsygankov; 97).

Third stage (2000-2008)

2000-2004

The Primakov doctrine was still very much a part of Russian policy at the time of Vladimir Putin's accession to power, but in a more suited form; based on pragmatism and flexibility (Paramonov & Stokov; 12). Nevertheless, Putin oversaw the revision of the National Security Concept where it was stated that Central Asia was one of the areas in which the strengthened Russia could exercise its national interests. Consequently, the opposition of this was deemed by the document as a "threat to the Russian Federation's national security" (Soviet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federatsii 2010)¹⁹.

However, the stated geopolitical outlook had to give way to pragmatism following the 9/11 terror attacks and the subsequent stationing of Western troops well inside what Russia deemed its "zone of interest". This marked the definitive breakthrough for US and Western presence in Central Asia, which in turn required a Russian policy shift in its relations with both the Central Asian states and the "aliens" (Jonson; 88). Hence, Central Asia became pivotal for the further development of Russian foreign policy; both in terms of Russo-Central Asian relations per se, but also as a means to further rapprochement with the West (ibid; 195). Russia was still seen as the single most important ally for the Central Asian states, but at the same time previous leadership models based on Russia as the region's gravitational center and Moscow's hegemonic domination of the neighboring states had to be discarded. This illustrated an acceptance of a larger degree of power-sharing as the new *modus vivendi* as the political power of the Central Asian states had increased (Antonenko 2007; 49).

In practical terms the reframing of the relationships was done by entering into a "strategic partnership" with the United States and its allies. This meant that Russia now emphasized cooperation with the West, but at the same time also focused on a more active policy in Central Asia than earlier, thus making sure that Russia did not become a passive spectator in the region (ibid; 98). One aspect of the multi-faceted cooperation was naturally centered on security and military issues in order to stabilize the region and enhance security, and also to

¹⁹ Lena Jonson notes that the issue of terrorism was at the forefront of Putin's political agenda even before the 9/11 attacks due to unrest both in the Caucasus (Chechen rebels invaded Dagestan) and in Central Asia proper (the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's (IMU) incursions into Kyrgyzstan during his time as Prime Minister in 1999. Hence, Central Asia was framed as a terrorist threat already before the beginning of the new millennium, which in turn made it a prioritized task to develop military and security cooperation in order to counter the terrorist threat (Jonson; 63).

aid in the fight against terrorism. However, the Russian scope of attention was further widened to also include economics as a measure to promote cooperation. This was primarily within the energy sector where Moscow sought to restore the common grid and pipeline system (Perovic; 67; Jonson; 188)²⁰. Russia's pragmatism should not be seen as a signal of an overall acceptance of "foreign" presence in Central Asia. The Russian skepticism was explicitly expressed in 2002, when the main driver of Russia's efforts in the post-soviet space was stated to be national security²¹ (Flikke & Wilhelmsen 2008; 25-26). In addition to fuel an argument that the partnership was more a matter of practical collaboration than of global integration, this also seems to suggest a Russo-Central Asian cooperation hierarchy where Russian objectives, rather than mutual ones, were given prominence from Moscow's point of view.

2004-2008

Russia's relations with the West started to sour as the USA prepared for the Iraq war. A clear manifestation of this came in February 2007, in what has later been known as Putin's Munich speech. Here, Putin accused Washington of seeking to establish a unipolar world, stating that "the United States has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations" (Prezident Rossii, 10/2 2007). This, in turn, led Moscow to resume its focus on multipolarity and downplay the role and significance of the partnership with the West (Flikke & Wilhelmsen; 11). Consequently, more attention was given to the post-Soviet space, and the focus on security and economy in relation to Central Asia was extended (ibid; 13)²².

Russia assumed the role of coordinator as it sought to create a regional security system, which was achieved in practice by stepping up activities within the *Collective Security Treaty*

²⁰ In regard to the overall economic sphere the situation did not change radically, which meant that the general trade between Russia and Central Asia remained underdeveloped (Paramonov & Stokov; 15).

²¹ The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifically designated this area as a prioritized zone for Russian policies; a choice "dictated by national security interests and economic interests" ("Rossiya i SNG: Sostoyanie i perspektivy", cited in Flikke & Wilhelmsen 2008; 26)

²² On another note, overall cooperation not only improved because of Russian initiatives; there was also an anti-Western rise in Central Asia, as a normative rhetoric concerning democratization started to spread (Matveeva 2007; 57). Russia seemed to capitalize from this situation in a double sense; not only did Russia increase its own power in an economic sense, it also consolidated its relative position vis-à-vis the West, as the West lost influence.

*Organization*²³ (CSTO) (Paramonov & Stokov; 14). This clearly emphasized the return of Central Asia as a strategically important area. Although the institutionalization of relations was an important part of the Russo-Central Asian collaboration in this period, a perhaps even bigger emphasis was placed on the “economization” of the relationship. Arguably, this process was also made easier by the growth of prices on hydrocarbon in the years before 2004, as the prices for crude oil rose from \$12 in 1998 to \$37.5 in 2004 (BP 2010).

Russia reinforced its position by providing state support for Russian businesses abroad and continued to develop the Russian position in sectors deemed strategically important, most notably the energy sector (Perovic; 65). It was a goal to “ensure that existing energy dependencies [were] stabilized and that Russia [maintained] its monopoly over energy flows via its transportation system” (ibid; 65). This way, Moscow could attend to both national and corporate interests simultaneously as it sought to secure both Russian influence and market shares (ibid; 65). In Central Asia the Russian state-owned gas monopolist Gazprom expanded its involvement, with reported investments of \$1.5 billion in Uzbekistan’s gas sector in 2006, as well as the creation of a joint venture with the Kazakh company KazMunayGaz which planned to supply 15 billion cubic meters of gas from Kazakhstan to Russia annually (RFE/RL 28/3 2006). This also illustrates that Russia sought bilateral ties with the Central Asian states.

On a multilateral level the *Eurasian Economic Community* (abbreviated EurAsEc, founded in 2000) and the CSTO constituted, and still constitutes, the major institutional frameworks for cooperation between Russia and Central Asia (Laruelle 2009; 6). The increased cooperation in turn made it easier for Russia to regain its position as main trade partner in the region; aptly illustrated by a tripling of Russo-Central Asian trade between 2003 and 2007; a third of which came from trade with hydrocarbons (Paramonov & Stokov 2007, cited in Laruelle; 7).

During Putin’s reign as president Russia managed to stop the downward spiral that seemed to trouble the relationship between Russia and Central Asia, by focusing on flexible policies and approaching matters pragmatically. Central Asia was therefore framed as a strategically important area in which Russia could and should have a share. Paramonov and Stokov notes that a recurrent theme in the Russian outlook seems to be that Central Asia is framed in its capacity to enhance Russia’s global status, and perhaps even more importantly as a means for

²³ First established as the Collective Security Treaty (CST) in 1992, but reestablished as CSTO in 2002.

promoting Russian economic development (Paramonov & Stokov; 19). Though acknowledging that Russia was incapable of regaining the geopolitical role the Soviet Union had had, Moscow has maintained a desire to improve Russia's standing.

It is therefore possible to argue that Russia moved from viewing Central Asia through a geopolitical prism to rather seeing the region through an economic one during the three stages we have outlined here. A seeming defining feature in the Russian framing has been an implicit knowledge of Central Asia as somewhat inferior, in the sense that Russian power is seen as the most important from Moscow's point of view. Based on this it could be argued that Russia sees its southern neighbors through a top-down perspective, with Moscow firmly on top. This provides the context for examining the period from 2008 to 2010.

3.2. Central Asia in Russian Foreign Policy

QUESTION: Are you a Westerner or a Slavophil? The world wants to know who you are.

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: You know, if I lived, say, at the end of the 19th century, I probably could have answered you this question with ease. Having read the best examples of Russian classic literature, one could just answer this question straightforward. But the world has changed, and today we have to be modern, therefore I assume the priority of Russian interests (Medvedev 2008).

Introductory remarks

Pavel Baev noted that the then newly elected president Dmitry Medvedev was faced with the two seemingly incompatible tasks of demonstrating consistency with the political course outlined by Putin while also showing that he himself was in charge of molding a policy that reflected both the contemporary world and Russia's interests (Baev 21/7 2008). The need for Moscow to take the new international context into consideration was also expressed by president Medvedev himself, stating that the impending foreign policy revision was a matter of *inventarizatsia*, i.e. taking inventory (Kozyrev 15/7 2008). The modification of policies received its outcome through the revision of several central policy documents. Of special interests here is the "new" *Foreign Policy Concept* (in the following FPC), the first security document signed by Medvedev following his inauguration, which will be referred to in the following pages and sections²⁴.

²⁴ The FPC is filed under Prezident Rossii (2008) in the bibliography.

Reflecting that Russia now operated from a position of strength, an aspect which at the time was highly debated due to the recently ended Georgia conflict, president Medvedev also presented what has come to be called the “Medvedev Doctrine” in August 2008. The so-called doctrine consisted of five points that were to guide Russian foreign policy considerations during Medvedev’s tenure as president, and could be summarized as follows: (1) Russia recognizes the primacy of the fundamental principles of international law, which define the relations between civilized peoples; (2) the world should be multipolar, as domination is unacceptable and such a world is unstable and threatened by conflict; (3) Russia does not want confrontation with any other country, and has no intention of isolating itself; (4) protecting the lives and dignity of Russian citizens, wherever they may be, is an unquestionable priority for Russia, this also includes the interests of the Russian business community abroad; (5) there are regions in which Russia has privileged interests. These regions are home to countries with which we share special historical relations and are bound together as friends and good neighbors” (Prezident Rossii 31/8 2008).

However, these guiding principles should obviously not be taken as a signal that Russia’s foreign relations were of a uniform or universal character. Wilson Rowe and Torjesen have argued that Russian conceptualizations of multilateralism operate in two geopolitical circles; the post-Soviet space and the world outside it (Wilson Rowe & Torjesen 2009; 3). In line with this, it is clear that this division also had practical implications as to how Russia understood its relations with the countries within the two dimensions, and consequently this affected the Russian framing of these relationships. Indeed, Stina Torjesen writes that the Russian multilateralism in Russia’s “neighborhood” is qualitatively different from the instruments utilized in what is in Russian debate termed the “far abroad” (Torjesen 2009; 153).

It therefore seems fair to argue that Russia’s policies towards Central Asia, although founded in the general Russian foreign policy principles, carries with it some distinct features and idiosyncrasies that are unique to this region. In order to catch up both of these, we will in the following pages start by giving a brief outline of Russia’s view on the international political arena, before we move on to the main topic of this section, namely the Russian foreign policy framings of Central Asia. This explains the geographical dimension of the Russian outlook we introduced above, as it seems natural to claim that it was the post-Soviet states, hereunder also Central Asia, that were referred to when Medvedev spoke of the Russian “regions of influence”. A further indication of the area’s importance in the Russian outlook, and the

desire to frame relations with the CIS in a positive manner, can be found in the following sentiment expressed in the FPC: “Development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS Member States constitutes a priority area of Russia's foreign policy” (FPC).

Brief outline of Russia’s general foreign policy outlook

As reflected in Medvedev’s points Russia was on the rebound, seeking to claim increase its powers internationally in light of Moscow’s strengthened position. The international Russian interests and ambitions was also reflected in the 2009 National Security Strategy to 2020 (hereafter, the NSS), where it was stated that Russia had “restored the country's potential to enhance its competitiveness and defend its national interests as a key player within evolving multipolar international relations” (NSS 2009)²⁵. Consequently, an important point here was the adoption of a more active foreign policy. This was also reflected in the FPC, where priority, inter alia, was given to achieve “(...) strong positions of authority in the world community which best meet the interests of the Russian Federation as one of the influential centers in the modern world, and which are necessary for the growth of its political, economic, intellectual and spiritual potential” (ibid.)²⁶.

In terms of Russia’s international engagement it was emphasized that Russia was to be guided by pragmatism. This underscored that Russia, although strengthened, saw its interests best met through pragmatic interaction and cooperation with the outside world. This notion was also reinforced by president Medvedev, who during a speech noted that “with all the acute contradictions on the global arena today, we are seeing a clear general eagerness to harmonize relations, establish dialogue, and reduce conflicts” (Prezident Rossii 12/7 2011). The Russian international involvement may here be seen as a means to accomplish just this.

This should, however, not be taken as a signal that Russia was completely content with the state of the global institutional framework. Moscow wanted to bring about a revision of the international system, which was also accentuated in the FPC:

Russia looks forward to the emergence of a stable system of international relations which is based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, mutually beneficial cooperation as well as the norms of international law. Such a system aims at ensuring reliable and equal security for every member of the

²⁵ The NSS is filed under Soviet Bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federatsii (2009) in the bibliography.

²⁶ Two other points were also seen as preeminent in the FPC; safeguarding national security and preserving the country’s sovereignty (FPC).

international community in the areas of politics, military, economics, information, humanitarian aid and others, and employs multilateral diplomacy as its main tool (FPC).

Russia here sought to attain a more level playing field that took into consideration the current state of global politics. This meant making adherence to international rules and cooperation on the basis of multipolarity the ruling principle for interstate interaction. This way, integration into the international framework helped fulfilling three Russian objectives: guaranteeing Russia's equal standing on the international stage; legitimizing Russia's equal standing by framing Moscow as a responsible player that adhered to international conventions and rules; while also making Russian foreign policy more effective as playing by the same rules at the same time also placed the same limitations on all actors²⁷.

Summing up, the discourse depicts Russia as an international power pole, pursuing national interests and enhancing its power accordingly. However, this is not to say that these interests were to be pursued blindly; decisions were to be made on the basis of pragmatism, marking that restraint was perhaps equally as important when considering which options to choose.

Framing Central Asia

Taking control and responsibility: Russia as the regional powerhouse

From a Russian point of view it was clear, as was the case with its international dealings in general, that it was necessary to legitimize both Russia's status and its presence in the former Soviet area. One way to do this was by highlighting the structural legacy of the Soviet Union. Here, Russia, although riddled with problems, emerged as massively superior in relation to the other post-Soviet states in terms of territory, military power and economic strength (Torjesen; 153). Hence, the dominating position of Russia in the Eurasian space allowed

²⁷ Commenting on just this, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the following about the global system at that time: "The international community for far too long passively watched the processes of imbalance in the existing global system of management, which runs into major snags not only in politics, but also in economics and finances. In the absence of common rules of conduct crises phenomena and instability will continue to pursue us" (Lavrov 2008a).

Moscow to act in an assertive manner²⁸. This point was also mentioned in the FPC, which noted the following about Russia's own estimation of its policy:

The distinguishing features of Russia's foreign policy are its balanced and multivectoral character. This is due to the geopolitical position of Russia as the largest Euro-Asian power, its status as one of the leading States of the world and being a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Our contemporary national interests make it imperative to actively promote positive agenda that covers the whole spectrum of international problems (FPC).

Although the term "Euro-Asian" is somewhat contentious, and may be interpreted in different manners, the emphasis of Russia's sheer size as a factor contributing to Russia's power would naturally also increase Russia's importance for the states in the near abroad. In effect, Russia's strong regional power base, here illustrated through its geographical positioning, would legitimize an active Russian policy in the region. This could be used as a mechanism for placing Russia in the forefront of dealings here. It may therefore be argued that Russia saw itself as balancer in the region and the CIS countries therefore were reliant or even dependent on Russia. Hence, Russia sees itself as "the first among equals", which gives Moscow a special position in the region.

However, this is not to say that Moscow saw itself as having a carte blanche to do as it pleased in its own "backyard". This can also be seen from the statement above, where Russia was to promote international problem solving as one of its foreign policy features. This way, it could be argued that Russia sought to position itself as a sort of patron to the region. This can also be seen from a statement made by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Grigory Karasin, who stated that

The Central Asian region is strategic and prioritized for Russia. For us, it is essential that the five states develop in the context of stability and security, which successfully tackles the challenges they face in terms of political, economic and social problems. We will continue to provide them with all necessary assistance to help ensure that the Central Asia region establishes itself as a region of effective international cooperation, and not competition (Karasin 2009).

²⁸ We can here also note an interesting parallel to the stance taken by Russia when speaking of the international structures. Whereas Russia spoke of revisionism in order for the international structure to reflect the global power balance, Russia employs an assertive tone that suggests that Russia was pleased with maintaining status quo on this area in Eurasia.

In line with what we outlined above, we here see that Russia places itself as a Central Asian benefactor which works towards the goal of promoting overall development in the region. Moreover, Russia here places itself as a provider of both stability and security, this way perhaps seeking to live up to the reputation as a regional “big brother”. Moreover, the views outlined above were also in accordance with the overall provisions of Russian foreign policy. The FPC stated that one of the chief objectives of Russian foreign policy was “to promote good neighborly relations with bordering States, to assist in eliminating the existing hotbeds of tension and conflicts in the regions adjacent to the Russian Federation and other areas of the world and to prevent emergence of the new ones” (FPC).

The assistance here has a dual advantage for Moscow. First, it illustrates Russia’s willingness to contribute to helping the near abroad-countries in overcoming their problems. This may buy Russia some goodwill which Moscow can employ elsewhere, presumably in dealings concerning more acute Russian objectives. Second, this helps keeping problems away from Russia proper. Combined, it can therefore be argued that the approach was driven by both protective and proactive factors. Related to what we have discerned above, a point can be made about the direction of interaction between the parts. As Russia was by far the most powerful of the states in the region, it is perhaps not too surprising that the framing here implies that the projection of power was mainly, if not wholly, one-directional; from Moscow to its former co-republics. This is also an indication of the “new” great power positioning of Russia; it is not only able to interact with its surrounding states, but is also able to provide them with help if necessary.

In such a way, Central Asia is framed as an area in which cooperation has a strong standing, but at the same time a focus is placed on the *potentiality* of the region as a threat to Russian interests. The CIS states are hence framed in a somewhat asymmetrical manner as Russia, with its self-proclaimed status as a great power, sees itself as the solution to dangerous or threatening situations that might arise. In turn, this suggests that Moscow saw the region as needing such protection, hereby underscoring the asymmetry between the parts. On another note, it could be suggested that Russia used this asymmetry to offset and increase Russia’s international standing; thus transforming regional superiority to international equality. Apart from delimiting its sphere of interest, this also helped Moscow mark a clear stance towards the West.

This way, this regional frame implicitly carries an international dimension, as Central Asia and the other post-Soviet states enable Russia to fulfill its ambition of participating in setting and carrying out the political agenda due to Russia's relative strength in the region. By framing the area in this manner Russia could use the area as a means to enhance its international status, and at the same time confirming its regional preeminence. The objective of this frame is therefore to reaffirm the position of Russia as an international power in a multipolar world by seeking to promote an image of Russia as a regional unipolar actor; simultaneously fronting Russia as a global center and a regional powerhouse.

Common ground

In an article from December 2008, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov remarked the following about the post-Soviet area:

For us the CIS space is not a "chessboard" for playing geopolitical games, nor an "arc of distrust." This is a common civilization area for all the peoples living here. It preserves our historical and spiritual heritage. Our geography, economic interdependence, and cultural/civilizational commonality give all CIS countries tangible competitive advantages. And the integrative imperatives of globalization make themselves strongly felt here as they do elsewhere (Lavrov 2008b).

Here, the cultural commonalities and interlinks between the parts were highlighted. That the preservation of the area's cultural distinctiveness was a priority in Moscow can also be seen from the fact that the FPC stated that "the cultural identity of the overwhelming majority of countries and peoples suffers the increasing onslaught of globalization" (FPC).

Moreover, the FPC also underlined that

Russia actively develops interaction between the CIS Member States in the humanitarian sphere by preserving and increasing the common cultural and civilizational heritage that provides an important resource for the whole of the CIS and for each of its Member States in the era of globalization (ibid.).

Hence, the framing here can be suggested to signal that protection of both the Central Asian states' and the other CIS states' culture served as a form of survival mechanism for the region as a whole. By evoking the psychological sentiments of affinity between Russia and the CIS states, Russia sought to gain a comparative advantage vis-à-vis its contenders in the region. Reflecting that Russia saw its relations with its closest neighbors as something more than a simple business-like connection, president Medvedev stated that "there are some long-term

strategic relations that do not have a direct monetary value. How can you calculate the value of friendship or of the historical ties that bind our peoples? These are things that cannot be expressed in dry figures” (Prezident Rossii 26/7 2009).

Moscow here drew upon the common history and experiences between the parts; which in turn had created a form of civilizational bond between the states in the region. This would in turn tie the Central Asian states more to Russia than to other powers. Apart from appearing as an attractive and obvious partner for the Central Asian states Russia could here also demarcate its domain in relation to both China and the West, hereby marking its regional preeminence. Extending this line of thought, we might argue that the civilizational focus creates a form of meta-frame where the countries, despite their differences and disagreements, appeared as united. This was also advantageous in regards to the Western aspect of Moscow’s foreign policy; as it marked a distance to Western structures *and* made the CIS appear as a united space. The effect this has vis-à-vis “foreign” actors such as China and USA is that it signaled that if these wished to deal with the Central Asian states, they also had to deal with Russia. In turn, Russia’s regional engagement could be used to fulfill Moscow’s international ambitions.

Naturally, this also necessitated an emphasis on the commonalities between Russia and the Central Asian states. One example of this is the Russian emphasis placed on celebrating the 65 year anniversary for the Second World War in 2010. In relation to this, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent out a press release following a proposal from Kazakhstan to build a monument over Kazakhstani soldiers in Rzhev in Western Russia, stating that

Large-scale events held in Russia and Kazakhstan in the year of the 65th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War reflect the high level of Russo-Kazakh relations and are clear confirmations of the friendship, mutual trust and continuity of the historical memory of the events of those days to the generation of today (MID 2010).

What we see from the statement above is an attempt to draw historical lines to emphasize the commonalities between the parts, hereby showing that the good neighborliness has its fundament in a common history, of which the parts still can reap benefits today. At the same time, Moscow displayed a clear eagerness to decouple its involvement in Central Asia and the

remaining CIS states from any ideological, in this case, neo-imperial notions²⁹. This point was also addressed by Lavrov, who stated in the aforementioned article that the Russians could not agree “when attempts are being made to pass off the historically conditioned mutually privileged relations between the states in the former Soviet expanse as a “sphere of influence” (Lavrov 2008b).

Based on this, it seems reasonable to propose that the defining feature of this part of the frame is the seeming move away from a strict reading of the Medvedev Doctrine’s point about “regions of privileged Russian interests” by substituting politics with culture as the basis for Russian interaction in the area. In effect, this helped de-politicizing the Russian relationship with CIS, and consequently also “acquitted” Russia of its involvement in the CIS area. Hence, it could perhaps be argued that the phrase “near abroad” can be connoted in two manners: not only can it be used to illustrate the geographical closeness between Russia and its neighbors; it also highlights cultural and psychological nearness between the inhabitants in these states. This notion was also expressed in the NSS:

Russia will seek to develop the potential for regional and subregional integration and coordination among member-states of the CIS, first of all within the framework of the Commonwealth, and also the CSTO and EurAsEc, which exert a stabilizing influence on the overall situation in the regions bordering on the CIS. Moreover, the CSTO is regarded as the main interstate instrument for responding to regional threats and challenges of a military-political or military-strategic nature, including the fight with illegal trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances (NSS 2009).

What is new here is the coupling of political areas to organizations; that is EurAsEc with economic dealings and CSTO when dealing with security matters. Moreover, the framing here implies a connection between institutional vehicles and the stability of the region, understating the importance of both aspects to Moscow. Also, this passage reaffirms CIS’ preeminence as a general forum and a vehicle for cooperation and coordination within several spheres. At the same time, great pains were taken to decouple the specializations of organs from any ideological motives. Sergei Lavrov wrote:

Regrettably, many of our western partners have been unable to appreciate the essentially postmodernist and ideology-free tendencies in the CIS space, predicated on a striving to use common values, the combined potential and heritage in the interests of our peoples. The Russia-Belarus Union State,

²⁹ This also related to a more general point in Russia’s discourse. Noting that post-Soviet Russia’s policies were seen by some as being guided by ideological overtones and motives, Lavrov noted that the policies of Russia as a full-fledged global actor were “guided in international affairs by understandable, pragmatic interests, void of any ideological motives whatsoever” (Lavrov 2008a).

EurAsEc or CSTO – these are not bloc, but integrating organizations. Relationships in them have their own civilizational specificities – here we do not oppress one another, do not twist arms, which far from all in the West can understand (Lavrov 2008b).

In light of Lavrov's statement above it might be argued that the expressed criticism served a specific function in this context. That is, rather than being a specifically *Russian* criticism of the West, this marked a united regional front against Western skepticism. Parallel with this, we may discern a temporal aspect, as Lavrov distinguished between institutional blocs, a concept with clear connotations to the cold war, and "integrating organizations" that suggested not only a leap in terms of years passed, but also a change in Russia's mentality regarding the CIS states.

Summing up

Summarizing the findings in the preceding pages, we see that the Russian framings of Central Asia share a common feature, namely Russian control in the region. The first framing suggests highlighted Russia's status as a regional great power, which in turn legitimates an assertive Russian in Central Asia. Moscow here depicted itself as playing a central role in ensuring peace and stability in the region. This way, Central Asia was portrayed as somewhat inferior and weak, and in need of its powerful "big brother" in order to manage. This also suggests that there exists a structural hierarchy between the parts; with Russia firmly on top.

The second framing was markedly different from the one summarized above. An emphasis was here placed on common historical and cultural bonds between the parts, which implicitly saw the Russo-Central Asian space as more of a regional community than distinct and separate states. Structurally speaking, the framing here places Russia and the CIS countries on an equal footing. This way, Moscow, refined its regional engagement, putting more weight on creating an environment for continued and even enhanced cooperation with the CIS states within a cultural framework. This changes the focus and tone of the discourse, as the point here is to attract the CIS countries to maintain their relationship with the former "big brother"

As was noted initially, we see that the Russian focus is on keeping and maintaining its clout in the region, which means that the discourse still has control as one of its focal points. This also illustrates the framings' international dimension. Through consolidation of the countries within Russia's orbit and under Russian supervision, Moscow wanted to make it harder for

other players to make their entrance in the region. In essence this meant solidifying the Russian position: Russia's power was to be illustrated by a clear Russian presence in Central Asia, which, combined with the civilizational aspect, provided Russia with leverage that was difficult for outsiders to counterbalance. The main goal of the frame, however, is to promote regionalism through institutional arrangements in order to arrive at solutions that were most beneficial for all parts, thus making regional concerns the centerpiece in the foreign policy orientation.

3.3. Central Asia in the Russian Security Discourse

Threat perceptions

The national reorientation that took place under Dmitry Medvedev's presidency also meant that Moscow needed to update its security policy. For this purpose the FPC provided an elaborate enumeration of the potential dangers at the time, illustrating that Russia employed a broad-brushed conceptualization of security. Most notable is perhaps the stressing of the negative consequences of one-sided use of force in international relations, along with the need for international cooperation and coordination. Furthermore, the FPC emphasized threats emanating from inter alia terrorism, nationalist sentiments, separatism, drug and human trafficking, religious radicalism and socio-economic turmoil (FPC).

It can be argued that the list above provides a differentiation between threats. On one side, international security threats are addressed, highlighting the potential fragility of the international structure. On the other, we see that the challenges presented are somewhat diffuse in terms of uniting features, but they can nonetheless be categorized as being of a more spatial or regional character. This restricts them to a more or less confined area³⁰. This differentiation in relation to the threats' geographical scope resembles the concentric approach to foreign policy outlined previously.

Naturally, these considerations also played part in Russia's framing of security in the CIS area. Unlike the overall framing, we can detect heterogeneity within the CIS space in terms of threat perceptions, this way leading to a concentric security differentiation also within the

³⁰ This is not to argue that terrorism does not constitute a global challenge; the point is rather that terrorism often is manifested through attacks within a certain geographically concentrated area. Hence, what is meant here is that although the very notion of terrorism is a global concern, it finds its expression, with some very notable exceptions, in a regionalist manner.

region. More specifically, two separate CIS security “fronts” emerged: in the Western part of CIS Russia continued to express an unequivocal skepticism regarding the plans of admitting Ukraine and Georgia in NATO, as well as the bringing of NATO’s military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders (ibid.). The second front, which will be the main focus of this section, was Central Asia. The FPC explicitly mentioned the regional security situation, and noted the following about Russia’s engagement in the area:

Russia will increase the cooperation with the CIS Member States in order to ensure mutual security. This includes joint efforts to combat common challenges and threats, primarily international terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, transnational crime, and illegal migration. The priorities here include the neutralization of the terrorist threat and drug trafficking threats emanating from the territory of Afghanistan, and prevention of risks of destabilization of the situations in Central Asia and Transcaucasia (ibid.).

In addition to reaffirming the importance of maintaining stability in the region and illustrating the region’s complexities in terms of security matters, we see that the prioritized tasks are related to problems originating in Afghanistan. This reflects that although the Central Asian states themselves struggled with a wide variety of problems, an important task was still to hinder spill-over effects from Afghanistan, which would worsen the situation in the CIS area. Hence, by creating a Russo-Central Asian bulwark against external threats, most notably Afghanistan, the states involved could consolidate the security efforts in the region, while also provide a sense of community in relation to mutual security.

Securing the “sphere of influence” or securing Russia?

Despite the abovementioned Russian fear of destabilization in the region, this was not the only motive in the Russian security outlook. The NSS expressed “in the sphere of international security, Russia will maintain its adherence to the use of political, legal, economic, military and other instruments to defend state sovereignty and national interests” (NSS 2009). Apart from stating that securing Russia and its interests was the centerpiece in Moscow’s security thinking, the statement can be read somewhat different in this context. The Russian “sphere of influence”, of which the Central Asian countries constitute an important part, is naturally an area in which Moscow has vital interests.

Hence, by securing Central Asia, Russia also secured its own vested interests. In light of this, it could be argued that Moscow saw Central Asian security as an extension of domestic

security. Central Asia's function in this equation, then, is that Russia secured itself by assisting in the maintenance of security in the region. Although securing Russia was the most important aspect here, the Russian leadership understood that a holistic approach needed to be in place in order to hinder the spread of dangerous elements and keep Russian interests under Moscow's control. Exemplifying just this, president Medvedev noted in connection with Russia's commitment in Afghanistan that "the situation in Afghanistan has an impact on the situation in Central Asia in general. The problems that arise in Afghanistan eventually crop up in Central Asia, unfortunately, and ultimately make their way here to Russia too" (Prezident Rossii 27/12 2009).

This way, threats against Central Asia was framed, if not as direct threats, but at least as negative indirect influences on Russia. Another indication of this can be seen by examining the Russian anti-drug strategy which was launched in 2009. One of the main threats listed here was "the smuggling of Afghan opiates and cannabinoids from the Central Asian countries", and that Russia, in order to improve the situation, would "increase Russia's role in providing technical assistance to Afghanistan and other countries in West and Central Asia in combating the Afghan drug threat" (MID 2009)³¹. Apart from highlighting one of the major security challenges in the region, the spill-over effect is here further highlighted. Moreover, this allowed Russia to reiterate its role as an active player in the Central Asian space.

Promoting regional security solutions

As we saw above, Russia sought to promote international cooperation in order to defeat common threats. However, this was not to say that Russia welcomed all parts into the security cooperation. Moscow displayed an eagerness to keep regional security matters regional; that is avoiding unnecessary involvement of external actors or institutions. The Russian wish to keep security matters related to the CIS space within its then present framework was also pointed to in the NSS, where it was stated that "there is an increasing tendency to seek resolutions to existing problems and regulate crisis situations on a regional basis, without the

³¹ Related to this, Moscow also displayed a clear discontent with NATO's engagement in the field of curbing the production of narcotics in Afghanistan, something that naturally caused the amount of drugs in Central Asia to grow. Russian UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin even stated that NATO's "incomprehensible passivity" in the combat against drugs combined with terrorism "has become a threat to peace and stability" (Eurasianet.org 15/10 2010). This way, Russia was also able to criticize the lack of tangible results from the NATO presence in Afghanistan, thus in effect fulfilling two objectives: mark Russia's skepticism towards the organization, whilst also labeling the organization ineffective, if not to say obsolete. In turn, this could allow Moscow to promote itself as a better security providing alternative.

participation of non-regional powers” (NSS 2009). Concomitant with this, it could also be argued that regional organizations were better suited to address the issues the region faced, as they were more adaptable and prepared for “local” security scenarios, hereby allowing for a customization of the institutional framework to fit the threats at hand. This creates a common understanding of the threat perceptions, which allows for closer coordination and cooperation on security matters. Moreover, the common perceptions could here also be used to facilitate further integration with the southern CIS countries; something that concords with the promotion of civilizational bonds between Russia and its former Soviet compatriots in the south.

The FPC stated:

The deepening crisis in Afghanistan poses a threat to the security of the southern CIS boundaries. Russia, in collaboration with other countries concerned, the United Nations, the CSTO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other multilateral institutions, will make consistent efforts to prevent the export of terrorism and drugs from Afghanistan, find a just and lasting political solution to the problems of this country while respecting the rights and interests of all country's ethnic groups and achieve post-conflict rehabilitation of Afghanistan as a sovereign and peace-loving State (FPC).

We here see that Afghanistan is given an additional position in the security discourse in addition to the one discerned above. Not only is it presented as a hornet's nest to Central Asia, hereby explaining the Russian presence in the region, but it also appears as an area in which both Russia and the world community at large has coinciding interests. This illustrates that Moscow did not pursue Central Asian security in an absolutist manner; pragmatism was also an important aspect in order to contain the Afghan problem. Despite this, it could be remarked that even though the world society is involved in Afghanistan, this should not be read as a Russian invitation to further cooperation to address problems inside the southern CIS countries. This reinforces the notion about a form of barrier or buffer between the CIS states and Afghanistan, reflecting the present dualism in the Russian discourse between control of its perceived sphere of influence and partnering with other actors to reduce the spread of instability.

Also, we can note the emphasis placed on soft power measures through institutional arrangements as the means to deal with security related issues in the area. Concomitant with this, it is interesting to note that all three of the organizations mentioned above are organizations in which Russia has a strong standing. This may also explain Russia's wish to

restrict participants' access to the Central Asian area, as maintaining the then current framework allowed Russia to keep its sway in the region. Through this, we also see that Central Asian security was a sphere within which Russia wished to promote itself as an important and powerful actor. In turn, this frames the power relations between as Russia and the Central Asian states as asymmetrical; where Central Asia's security is framed as being dependent on the presence of Russia, the most powerful player in the region, to provide just this.

It also seems possible to suggest that the different organizations mentioned in the passage above have different functions in the Russian outlook. Internationally, Moscow sought to promote the UN as its main channel for promoting and addressing global causes. Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, would here be able to influence decision making processes, thus allowing Moscow to promote its own view. Furthermore, by involving the UN in matters related to Afghanistan Russia would legitimize its own role as part of the global framework. Still, the overall tone suggests that it was preferable to keep matters regional. This notion was reiterated through the phrase "the countries concerned"; marking that Moscow placed more emphasis on pragmatic problem solving than the format of cooperation. This also marks the Russian wish to keep control over the events in the area. This explains the explicit mentioning of the regional organizations CSTO and SCO³². As with the UN, they are strategically important, albeit for somewhat different reasons. We will briefly assess both organizations in the following, in order to clarify their significance for the Russian security framing.

CSTO

President Medvedev perhaps said it best when he noted the following about the CSTO: "[The CSTO] includes countries very close to us. This is not a military bloc in the traditional sense of the word but rather an organization responsible for guaranteeing the security of a group of countries that have come together in union" (Prezident Rossii 7/5 2010).

In line with this, the Russian Military Doctrine (MD) stated that one of the main military-political priorities of Russia in the following years was to cooperate with CSTO member

³² CSTO and SCO are actual organizations, and are therefore not only pure discursive themes. However, they could be described as institutionalized security practices that are rooted in the Russian discourses and understandings of Central Asia.

states to “consolidate efforts and create collective forces in the interests of ensuring collective security and joint defense” (Prezident Rossii 2010)³³. First, we can note that the CSTO constituted the main structure for Russo-Central Asian multilateral military collaboration. In effect, this turned the CSTO into a regional security community; gathering all the Central Asian CIS states, with the notable exception of Turkmenistan, under one umbrella in terms of military security. By institutionalizing military cooperation Moscow sought to create a stable basis for problem resolving, while also reduce potential friction between the countries.

Second, it is noteworthy that CSTO is presented as being designed to facilitate both *collective security* and *collective defense*. This division is of importance when dealing with Russia’s near abroad, as *collective security* concerns the regulation of behavior within a group of states, while *collective defense* focuses on external threats to its participants (Sakwa & Webber 1999; 384 in Weinstein 2007; 170). This means that the CSTO was to deal both with security related concerns emanating from inside the member countries *and* threats emerging from the outside of the organization’s perimeter, most notably Afghanistan. This serves Moscow’s security priorities in the region. Both of these aspects were also highlighted in the NSS: “the CSTO is regarded as the main interstate instrument for responding to regional threats and challenges of a military-political or military-strategic nature, including the fight with illegal trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances” (NSS 2009). The CSTO is framed as an organization that can address both current and more longstanding issues.

The notion that Moscow saw the CSTO as a main vehicle in its engagement in Central Asia was strengthened in the FPC:

[Russia will] promote in every possible way the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as a key instrument to maintain stability and ensure security in the CIS area focusing on adapting the CSTO as a multifunctional integration body to the changing environment, as well as on ensuring capability of the CSTO Member States to take prompt and effective joint actions, and on transforming the CSTO into a central institution ensuring security in its area of responsibility (FPC).

Apart from reiterating that the member countries stood together in the handling of regional security, of special interests here is the mentioning of CSTO as “ensuring security in its area of responsibility”, i.e. taking responsibility in Central Asia. Russia, the biggest geopolitical player of the CSTO members, naturally occupied a leading position within the CSTO

³³ In addition to these countries, Armenia and Belarus are also members in the CSTO.

framework. In practical terms, Russia then then was the dominant decision maker in the organization. Russia was now able to influence the agenda setting considerably, hereby promoting Russian views and interests, while also increasing Russia's presence in the region.

Hence, the CSTO provided Russia with a mechanism to exert and strengthen its power internationally, which was in line with the overall Russian outlook. Moreover, CSTO became a viable Russian-led alternative to NATO in terms of military defense in and of the Central Asian space. This made it possible for Moscow to check any NATO-moves in the CIS space, hereby clearly marking its territory. The Russian wish to be seen as on par with the rest of the world also found its expression in the framing of CSTO. Because of this, it is not surprising that president Medvedev on a CSTO summit in Moscow in 2009 was quoted stating that the newly established rapid-reaction force of the CSTO would be "just as good as comparable NATO forces" (RIA Novosti 4/2 2009).

Based on this, it seems possible that Central Asian military security had a two-fold purpose in the Russian framing. First, by uniting most of the countries within one structure, Russia was more in control of the security situation in the area. Security threats were here framed as being of common character, meaning that a threat to one country represented a threat to all CSTO members. This ensured a common ground for military security cooperation, as threats here were seen as having either a spill-over or a domino effect. Apart from easing coordination and created a fundament for dialogue, this at the same time this allowed Russia to increase its security presence in the region. Hence, security is used as a uniting and integrating feature among the CSTO members, but with Russia as a regional security manager.

Second, the CSTO enabled Russia to institutionalize its skepticism towards NATO; by marking that Russia had backing for its security priorities in Central Asia. Central Asian security is here framed as something best dealt with through the CSTO; making this a better overall security solution for the Central Asian countries than NATO. Securing the southern CIS area was therefore not only a matter of keeping the area stable; the CSTO also provided Russia with a mechanism for turning Central Asian security into an arena for a great power game with the West.

SCO

Marcel De Haas has noted that the focus on the SCO pointed to a different trend in the Russian outlook, where an increasingly larger emphasis has been placed on Moscow's Eastern partners (De Haas 2010; 88). Reflecting this, the FPC stated that one of the regional priorities of Russian policy to "further strengthening of the SCO, promoting its initiative for setting up a network of partner ties among all the integration associations in the Asia-Pacific Region occupy a special place" (FPC). It could be argued that this "special place" means that the SCO comprises a distinct component in Russia's multilateralism in the Central Asian space. This distinctiveness is largely derived from the fact that China occupies the dominant position in the SCO along with Russia. This sharing of security responsibility in turn also influenced the regional security cooperation dynamics.

That the SCO was a different phenomenon in the Russian security framing of Central Asia was also apparent in the NSS: "Of particular significance for Russia will be the reinforcement of the political potential of the SCO, and the stimulation within its framework of practical steps towards the enhancement of mutual trust and partnership in the Central Asian region" (SBRF 2009). We can discern two features from this passage. First, we see that the SCO is promoted as *political organization*. This makes it distinct from CSTO, which primarily serves as a military-political organization. Second, the main emphasis is placed on the strengthening of a common fundament that facilitates a higher degree of cooperation. Based on this, it could be argued that the function SCO first and foremost is as a distinct *platform* for cooperation, enabling countries with distinct forms of government coordinate their positions. This could be interpreted as a Russian wish for the SCO to work as an Eastern-based international community, which in turn allowed the organization to counterweight Western and U.S. presence in the region. Moreover, it is clear that SCO also helped Moscow keeping an eye on China's moves in the region. This can be explained by a Russian fear of China being in the process of "outgrowing" Moscow in economic terms. By maintaining the importance of an arena of dialogue with Beijing, Russia had at least some way of making its views heard.

In an interview with the Chinese newspaper Zhenmin Zhibao, president Medvedev outlined which threat concerns that the SCO primarily concerned itself with. Apart from noting that the "SCO had every reason for becoming the main platform for regional cooperation on Afghanistan", Medvedev noted in relation to security matters that "within the SCO we fight together against terrorism and separatism, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

The organization's joint counterterrorism military exercises help enhance its role in combating new threats and challenges” (Prezident Rossii 26/9 2010). Hence, the SCO’s security domain largely coincided with Russia’s own security concerns in the area. However, Russia did not approach SCO-cooperation in the same manner as it did with CSTO. Whereas CSTO constituted the military-strategic aspect of regional security, president Medvedev in the same interview stated that “the main focus of our cooperation within the SCO is economic and humanitarian. I am convinced that sustained progress in all fields in which we work will contribute to further strengthening our organization” (ibid).

What is interesting here is the introduction of economy and socio-political prosperity into the Russian security equation. Central Asian security is here approached in a more infrastructural manner, where economic development was seen as the basis of future socio-economic stability. Based on this, we can argue that SCO primarily is concerned with the non-traditional security, which separates it from the CSTO in terms of remit. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on economic and humanitarian collaboration as the fundament for SCO’s involvement may be seen as instruments to promote regional integration as a security tool. Having seen the expensiveness and futility of the US engagement in Afghanistan, it can be argued that the SCO members with their huge economic muscles here represent an alternative security dynamic, based on stability and economic development. Because of this, it can be said Russia through the SCO framed security through what we might term a “silk road”-approach, characterized by a focus on trade and development. This can be seen in contrast to a “great game”-style of security, which connotes hegemonic behavior.

Summing up

Summing up, we see that the Russian security framing of the southern CIS space is a complex matter that seeks to comprise many elements into an overarching narrative. The threats identified in relation with the area were both multifaceted in terms of character and in geographical scope. To a very large extent, threats were either treated as internal, Central Asian issues or spill-over problems related to Afghanistan. Russia is interested in global cooperation on some threats, including stopping drug trafficking and terrorism. This illustrates both a Russian pragmatism *and* opportunism, as Moscow understood that it could not successfully deal with these matters unilaterally. At the same time, Russia sought to keep its sway in the region. By institutionalizing security and only using organization where Russia

had a strong standing, Russia could control the area by functioning as a regional security manager. This effectively frames the Central Asian states as secondary to Russia in their providing for their own security. Within the organizations, however, the threats were framed as being equally worrying for all parts, hereby creating a sense of Russo-Central Asian community in security matters.

The organizational diversification to counter threats pertaining to Central Asia can also be seen as an expression of a more general Russian view on Central Asian security as a great power game. In relation to the West, Central Asia's security was related to military means, marking willingness to restrict Western presence in the post-Soviet space. This way, Russia put up a "hard" security stance vis-à-vis the West, which in effect framed Central Asia to fall under Russia's security domain. This approach is moderated in Russia's security cooperation with the East. The main emphasis is here placed on socio-political and economic development to contain security threats. This indicates a more "soft" security approach. This may be seen as a reflection of the international geopolitical climate, where Russia uses more compromising measures in its relations with the mighty China than it does when addressing the weakened West. Nevertheless, a uniting feature for both of these directions is that Central Asian security is placed within a "checks and balance"-framework. Here, the security structures are not only important in order to secure Central Asia, but they also constitute ways for Russia to keep a certain control of the West and China respectively.

3.4. Central Asia in the Russian Energy Policy

Taking a new reality into consideration

The 2008 financial crisis had a profound impact on the global energy markets, as prices fell sharply. That this also was a dramatic event for Russia can be seen from the fact that energy exports according to official Russian figures accounted for 66.7 % of Russia's total export earnings in 2009, which clearly highlights the Russian dependence on its energy resources to keep the economy going³⁴ (Rosstat 2011). Taking these developments into account, the Russian government expedited a revised energy strategy that better reflected the new realities and priorities. The new strategy, officially named *Energy Strategy of Russia for the period up*

³⁴ Of this, crude oil accounted for 33.4 % and gas 13.9 %.

to 2030 (hereafter, ES 2030), was adopted in November 2009³⁵. In light of the fact that Russian authorities saw it necessary to produce a new energy strategy to deal with the then-current energy political climate, it is here argued that this also impacted on the Russian framing of Central Asia, some of which states occupies important positions in the international energy system. Hence, given that the ES 2030 reflects the most current official Russian understanding of energy, and thus also Central Asia's role in the Russian energy framing, the following analysis will be based on this document. The ES 2030 mentioned Central Asia five times, respectively in relation to sections dealing with three different aspects: Russia's position in world energy markets; the gas industry and finally foreign energy policy. This is also the order in which the Central Asia's role in the Russian energy context will be analyzed.

Russian energy dominance

The ES 2030 was eager to emphasize the leading role of Russia in the global energy complex, this way underscoring the structural importance of the country. The strategy reads:

Russia is world leading in terms of natural gas reserves (23% of the world reserves) and annual production of natural gas. Russia provides 25% of the world trade in natural gas, dominating both on the European gas market and on the gas market of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Russian gas accounts for approximately 30% of the overall gas consumption in the European countries (including Turkey, but excluding the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States). With its unique gas transportation system, Russia is also playing an important role in ensuring the supply of gas from Central Asia to Europe and to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (ES 2030; 8).

The statement highlights that Moscow saw both Central Asia and the field of energy as such through a multidimensional prism, which in turn necessitated Moscow to consider Central Asia's role on several "fronts" simultaneously. Hence, we can here see that the framing applies to a variety of energy relations; the *Russian-Central Asian*, the *European-Central Asian*, the *Russian-European*, the *Russian-CIS*, as well as *European-CIS*. Consequently, this also makes it more difficult to examine Russo-Central Asian relations isolated from other developments. One may read this as an awareness on Moscow's part that geopolitical developments had indeed altered the international power balance, necessitating to Moscow to treat the Central Asian countries as independent actors on this field rather than taking them

³⁵ The ES 2030 is filed under Institut Energeticheskoy Strategii (2010) in the bibliography.

for granted. Even so, this is not to say that the statement does not convey a message of interdependency between the different parts, where Russia is framed as the strongest part of the two. This reiterates the Russian foreign policy framing we outlined earlier.

This can be seen through the emphasis on the Russian-controlled old Soviet pipeline system, whose uniqueness should be interpreted as signaling the Russian monopoly on Central Asian energy at the time³⁶. Because of the low costs of oil and gas production in Central Asia relative to Russia, Moscow attempted to secure long-term and large-scaled supplies of energy from the region to complement its own export obligations. This way, Central Asian energy reserves had a function in both Russia's domestic and foreign policy. Domestically the Central Asian hydrocarbons enabled Moscow to keep energy prices low for Russian companies and consumers, thereby alleviating social pressures in Russia (Woehrel 2009; 2). In terms of foreign policy, two aspects can be mentioned. First, the Russian keenness in keeping a close eye on energy developments in Central Asia can be explained as due to the fact that an interruption of the flow of energy from south to north would constitute a major problem for the decision makers in Moscow. Second, Russia was also aware of the interest taken in Central Asia's energy resources by the other players in the region, most notably, the US, the EU and China.

Thus, in the scenario depicted above, Moscow was able to control the export of oil and gas from Central Asia to Europe, hereby acting as both an intermediary in Europe-Central Asian energy relations and as a (re)exporter of Central Asia's energy products. This way, Central Asia is framed as being structurally dependent on Russia, something that in turn places Russian in the forefront of energy relations with both Europe and the Central Asian states. Highlighting this dependency, the ES 2030 stated that the completion of various infrastructure projects³⁷ would allow for the commencement of large-scale development of the energy fields on the Yamal Peninsula, which is connected to the westward-flowing Russian pipeline network. In turn, this would "reduce transit risks with regard to the gas exports to Europe and

³⁶ However, just a month after the launching of the 2030 Energy Strategy China opened a big gas pipeline in the area, running from Turkmenistan to China. This reflects both the necessity of multidimensionality in matters relating to energy and the rise of China as a geopolitical factor in Central Asia. Moreover, this also signaled the end of Russia's pipeline monopoly in the region. The Turkmenistan-China will also be dealt with later in this section.

³⁷ Two of the projects referred to are the "Severniy Potok" (Nord Stream) gas pipeline and the northern areas of the Tyumen Region – Torzhok gas pipeline (ES 2030; 49).

allow for the possibility to expand the transit of Central Asian gas to Europe through the Russian gas transport system” (ES 2030; 53).

This framing is noteworthy, as it places Russia and the Central Asian states on the same side, and the transit states on the other. Hence, by building the pipelines Russia, and possibly also the Central Asian states, could export its energy products to the European markets without having to cross Ukrainian or Belarusian territory, through which nearly 80% and 20% respectively of the Russian gas export to Europe was going (Godzimirski 2011; 124). This way, the discourse here frames Russia and the Central Asian states as having converging interests as energy producers in getting rid of the transit dependence. By doing so Moscow also sought to maintain Russia’s own transit advantage vis-à-vis its neighbors in the south, hereby keeping control of both the direction of the energy flows and export volumes from Central Asia.

Political measures

Nonetheless, the political realities also necessitated Russia to address the region in manner that reflected the region’s power boost. The ES 2030 noted the following as a goal in Moscow’s dealings with Central Asia:

Attain a stable development of gas imports from the Central Asian states, mainly from the states in the near abroad. The volumes of import will be formed depending on the economic conditions on the foreign gas markets and the state of the fuel and energy balance of Russia (ES 2030; 52).

First, we can note that Central Asia is important due to its position in the energy market chain, and due to the fact that Russia imports gas from the region in order to meet its own export obligations and needs of the domestic market (Paramonov 2008; 1). In light of the developments in the region over the past few years, it could here be argued that Russia needed to take into consideration the power boost Central Asia had had. Hence, rather than seeing the region as a post-imperial space that Russia could control, Russia here had to consider some of the Central Asian states as actual or potential competitors at the international energy markets. This growing internationalization and competition in the energy field can indicate that Russia saw it necessary to treat its southern neighbors in a more business-like manner than was the case for instance throughout the 1990s. Related to this, we see that the volume of imports of

Central Asian energy resources to Russia were to be decided based on assessments of the current economic situation.

At the same time we can detect a Russian wish to expand and enlarge the Russo-Central Asian energy relations, indicating that the region was indeed a priority in the Russian energy outlook. This enlargement would be advantageous in two manners for Russia. First, this would secure Central Asian energy supplies to Russia³⁸. Second, this would in Russian eyes bring positive spill-over effects as it made it more difficult for other foreign actors to establish bonds with the regional states, as parts of their energy reserves then already would be tied up in other, notably Russo-Central Asian, deals. In turn, this would allow Moscow to keep its market shares on the international energy market, as other energy importers hereby would become more dependent on Russia for supplying the required volumes of energy. Hence, although illustrating an awareness in Moscow of the reduced Russian clout in the region, this framing shows that cooperation with the Central Asian states were preferable as this was the best alternative for Russia given the overall situation to influence developments in the region.

The rise of the East

The creation of stronger bonds to Central Asia was also beneficial for Moscow in another sense. The ES 2030 states:

Export of gas, which is carried out mainly on the basis of long-term contracts, will allow to maintain the required volume of supplies from Russia to the European market, while the Eastern direction (China, Japan, the Republic of Korea) will be increased drastically. At the same time Russian gas producing companies will take an active part in the development of gas fields in other countries (Algeria, Iran, the Central Asian countries and others) and the construction of new interregional pipelines particularly in South Asia, in addition to coordinate their export policy with these countries (ES 2030; 52).

³⁸ The Energy Strategy of Russia to 2020, the ES 2030's predecessor, was even more sincere, stating: "Россия заинтересована в долгосрочном и масштабном вовлечении в свой топливно-энергетический баланс углеводородных ресурсов (особенно природного газа) центрально-азиатских стран-участниц СНГ. Это не только позволит экономить ресурсы северных газовых месторождений России для будущих поколений и избежать необходимости форсированных капиталовложений в их разработку, но и даст ей возможность уменьшить давление на рынки, которые представляют стратегический интерес для самой России" [Russia is interested in long-term and large-scale involvement in its energy balance of hydrocarbon resources (especially natural gas) from the Central Asian CIS countries. This will not only save resources of the northern gas fields in Russia for future generations and avoid forced investments in their development, but also enable it to reduce pressure on markets that are of strategic interest for Russia.] (ES 2020; 47).

Highlighting one of the Russian strategic priorities in the field of gas exports, the paragraph emphasizes Moscow's desire to attain a higher degree of export market diversification. In practical terms this meant maintaining Russia's position in Europe while increasing the share of the Asian markets in Russia's energy export. This also meant lessening Russian export dependence on Europe. At the same time, the above quoted passage can be taken as a sign of a Russian wish for further integration with the Central Asian states on energy related matters. Initially, it could be noted that the Russian assistance in developing the countries' gas deposits may be read as an indication of a perceived Russian technical superiority within the energy sector. This meant that Moscow's help could be seen as a development project.

This aside, we can also detect another possible explanation for this particular focus. The Russian intention of close cooperation with other important gas producers would allow Russian policymakers to promote the use of Russian firms, probably most notably Gazprom, in the development of Central Asian countries' gas resources, which were not yet fully developed. This, in turn, would give Russia a place in the gas structure of the country in question, which would be in accordance with the Medvedev Doctrine outlined earlier, as Russia here could assert itself abroad through its businesses. Given the Russian states' control over the industry, especially in the gas sector, the promotion of Russian industry would naturally also give Moscow "a foot in the door" in terms of both developing and operating the host countries' energy complexes. Hence, through investments Russia sought to attain a certain degree of leverage or control the respective states' energy policy, which would allow Moscow to monitor production and transit. This interpretation is also strengthened by the fact that the ES 2030 stated that "Russian pipeline infrastructure is to become an integral part of the power bridge between Europe and Asia, and Russia will become the key center of its management" (ibid; 54). This would in turn place Moscow in a highly favorable position both vis-à-vis the Central Asian states and, equally important, other competitors in the region. Hence, it could here be argued that Russia saw investment in the Central Asian energy sector as a means to an end, namely to control the flows of energy from Central Asia.

Energy integration

The wish to create transport hegemony through regional consolidation was also apparent in the following section of the ES 2030:

Russia will step up its efforts to consolidate its gas transport infrastructure around major regional gas production centers (the Central Asian countries, Iran). Russia will also form an integrated Eurasian system for transporting gas in order to secure export and transit flows between Europe and Asia (in particular, the building of the “Yuzhniy Potok” (South Stream) pipeline will be completed) (ibid; 54)

Here, Russia frames itself as a co-participant of the development of the so-called “gas producing centers”, hereby acting as a facilitator. Through this role, which also could be explained by reference to Russia’s status as a core energy player, Russia could promote its views and guide the developments in a direction that the Kremlin would feel comfortable with. In other words, rather than assuming direct control over developments, Russia sought to influence the decision making processes by actively engaging in them. This in turn reiterates the notion of a movement towards market based dealings.

Furthermore, we should here note the use of the word *Eurasia*³⁹ to describe the scope of the Russian-thought transport system. Moscow here employs this term to denote an integrated European-Asian space, which means that the geographical positioning and the resource fundament of both Russia and the Central Asian states would grant the countries a central position in this complex. Hence, the investments in the development of the Central Asian states energy sectors would allow Russia to promote its own interests in a two-fold manner. Internationally, Russia would be able to monitor the international energy flows; and on a more regional basis Russia would have a legitimate say in the formulation of the Central Asian policies. Both of these mechanisms would thus be used to ensure sufficient supply of Central Asian gas to Russia.

In light of this, it is not surprising that Moscow sought to attain a higher degree of energy cooperation than what had been the case previously. Naturally this also had implications for the pattern of cooperation with the Central Asian states. Commenting on the format of energy dialogue the ES 2030 stated the following:

An active energy dialogue is conducted with the largest countries – consumers and producers of energy resources, as well as with major regional groupings (the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Community and others) and international organizations (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Forum for Gas Exporting Countries, the International Energy Agency etc.)⁴⁰ (ibid; 56).

³⁹ See footnote on page 22 for definition of this term.

⁴⁰ The ES 2030 even stated that one of the mechanisms for ensuring the fulfillment of state policy objectives was “development of energy cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian

In relation to Central Asia two points should be made here. First, we can note the prominent position of multilateral regional diplomacy in the Russian energy outlook; as Moscow sought to cooperate with both the EurAsEc and the SCO. This indicates the rise of Asia, both Central and Northeast, in global affairs, and consequently that Moscow saw to transform the form of interaction to reflect the new realities of both regional and global integration. The fact that these organizations largely deal with security and economy respectively, seems to suggest that it was through focus on these points that Moscow attempted to approach the Central Asian states and their respective energy sectors. In addition, as we outlined earlier, these are both organizations in which Russia has a prominent position. In relation to this thesis this meant that Moscow gained flexibility, as it could differ between framing Central Asia's energy resources as being either a "merely" a resource that could be traded on par with other commodities or as a matter of strategy and security. The framing aside, this creates an impression of the Russian energy policies in Central Asia as being guided by realpolitik and pragmatic considerations, where pros and cons were being weighed up against one another.

Second, we see that the Russian framing's "energy categorization" is based on the respective countries' position in the energy chain, thus showing the need for Moscow to consider multiple roles in the energy complex simultaneously. This reveals something about the logic which Moscow assumes when dealing with its southern neighbors. As the different Central Asian countries belong to various categories Moscow was required to employ different approaches to the individual countries. This will briefly be examined in the next sections, by focusing on the two countries with the largest gas and oil reserves respectively, namely Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan⁴¹.

Turkmenistan

The importance of energy in the Russo-Turkmen relationship was emphasized by president Medvedev, who during a two-day visit in Turkmenistan in October 2010 was quoted stating

Economic Union, North-Eastern Asia, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and European Union as well as with other international organizations and countries" (ES 2030; 35-36).

⁴¹ According to BP's Statistical Review of World Energy from 2010, Turkmenistan possessed 8.10 trillion cubic meters of gas, placing the country 4th in the world in terms of gas resources, with a share of 4.3%. Kazakhstan, with 39.8 thousand million barrels of oil, is the largest oil producer in Central Asia. With a 3% share of the world's total oil resources, Kazakhstan is the 9th largest producer in the world (BP 2010).

that “energy is the key element” in the Russo-Turkmen cooperation, and that Russia was ready to develop it in further areas (RIA Novosti 22/10 2010). Expanding on just this point, Medvedev noted the following:

I think that energy efficiency and new technology are extremely important areas for our future joint efforts, and we have therefore agreed to hold a forum on innovation, new technology and energy efficiency. I believe that our countries should work on this if only because we are big energy suppliers and so the question of what technology is used in the energy sector – and in other sectors too - is of great importance for us. This is a good idea and we will definitely work on it (Prezident Rossii; 22/10 2010).

First, the emphasis on the parts’ similar roles as energy suppliers in the energy complex could be read as a Russian attempt to frame the parts as peers with similar interests and challenges within the sphere of energy. This could in turn create a fundament a normative convergence that could be used to promote further approximation between the parts. However, we should here also notice that cooperation could commence “if only” because of the positioning of the parts in the international energy complex. This indicates that although energy cooperation could be enhanced, this was because of realpolitikal considerations and not due to an intimate overall Russo-Turkmen relationship⁴².

Second, the focus on the energy infrastructure illustrates Moscow’s wish to promote development of more comprehensive energy cooperation, centered on mutually beneficial programs. In light of what we outlined earlier in this section, this could indicate that Moscow sought to create an opportunity for Russian companies to participate in the development and extraction of the Turkmen energy fields, this way expanding the companies’ reach. The interpretation that this was the intended message behind this statement is strengthened by the fact the next sentence in Medvedev’s speech was that “we value the active work big Russian companies are pursuing in Turkmenistan’s market and we are ready to expand these ties” (ibid.). This way, Moscow would also be in a better position to check other international players’ interest in the Turkmen energy resources.

⁴² That this relationship was far from cloudless can be seen in relation to an explosion on the Turkmen part of the “Central-Asia Center” gas pipeline system, which runs from Turkmenistan via Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Russia in April 2009. Turkmen authorities quickly placed the blame on Russia and Gazprom that according to Ashgabat had abruptly cut its gas imports through the pipeline due to a lack of European demand as a result of the financial crisis in 2008. This created a sharp change in the pressure of the pipeline which in turn created the explosion. For a summary of the chain of events as seen from a Russian point of view, see <http://lenta.ru/story/pipeline/> (in Russian).

The fact that Russia needed to take into consideration both the power boost of Turkmenistan and the emergence of other players in the area was clearly exemplified by the fact that Russia was prepared to start buying Turkmen gas at market prices, thus marking that “there is no need for Turkmenistan to implement energy projects with other countries” (RIA Novosti; 3/7 2008). This marked that although Russia at that point was in a strong position due to the pipeline structure, a new approach was necessary so as to avoid Ashgabat in seeking to diversify its export.

On the question of whether Russia was about to lose its traditional strong economic position in Turkmenistan, Sergei Lavrov reflected that the preservation of the “old system” was impossible as he noted the following:

If we use as a starting point the initial and immutable chart of the Soviet times when all Turkmen gas, as well as any other, ran through main gas pipelines of the Soviet Union we all understand that this is not a realistic perspective. What is happening today with the hydrocarbons that are produced in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan is the solution emerging from their economic interests (Lavrov 2010).

Reflecting Ashgabat’s increasing powers, Turkmenistan entered into no less than three large-scale energy deals during the course of just a year. Except the previously mentioned Turkmenistan-China pipeline that was agreed upon in December 2009, Ashgabat concluded a pipeline deal with Iran in the following month, and finally the so-called *TAPI*-pipeline in December 2010. The latter pipeline would go from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. These projects naturally helped augmenting Turkmenistan’s bargaining position vis-à-vis Russia, hereby making it easier for Turkmen authorities to require Moscow to pay market prices.

However, it seems erroneous to claim that Turkmenistan’s diversification projects were interpreted in a negative manner in Moscow. On the contrary, Lavrov stated that “nothing of what is being done by these countries in terms of diversifying their energy deliveries infringes upon our interests. We see this as part of the overall process of improving the global efforts to ensure global energy security” (ibid). Exemplifying this, the TAPI project was indeed endorsed by Moscow. Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin noted that Gazprom was ready to participate in the TAPI both as a contractor, “a projecting company and as a member of the consortium” (Kommersant 13/12 2010). This would give Moscow indirect access to the pipeline, which corresponds with the Russian approach outlined above. Furthermore, the

geographical direction of the new pipelines is noteworthy, as it means that Turkmenistan mainly directed its diversification towards different parts of the Asian markets, rather than seeking to approach Europe. This very reason seems to constitute the main reason for Russia's support of the project, as it could reduce Ashgabat's desire to participate in the EU's Nabucco project, which was scheduled to bypass Russia (ibid).

Hence, by giving Turkmenistan room to operate in Asia, Russia could enhance its position vis-à-vis the EU by denying Brussels diversification opportunities that sought to exclude Russia. Related to the point above about creating mutually beneficial projects, this would diversify Turkmenistan's energy resources by giving another outlet, while Russia would gain by preserving its position in the profitable European market. Realizing that Ashgabat would follow its own agenda, we here see that the framing sought to merge the parts through the realization of mutually beneficial projects, rather than through closer overall Russo-Turkmen interaction. Hence, Russia was not necessarily strictly opposed to Turkmen diversification as such, but rather sought to influence developments in such a way that the diversification took place in directions that avoided bringing Russia's and Turkmenistan's main interests onto a collision course.

Kazakhstan

Energy cooperation also constituted an important component of Russia's relations with Kazakhstan. In a speech at the Russia-Kazakhstan Interregional Cooperation Forum in September 2009 president Medvedev noted the following: "Over the last several years, we have been implementing joint projects in all areas. We have just mentioned prospecting, mining, refining and transporting hydrocarbons and constructing new facilities" (Prezident Rossii; 11/9 2009). What can be noted about this framing is the extensiveness of the joint energy efforts; encompassing a wider format of cooperation than what Russia promoted in relation to the gas transport integration. One explanation for this could be that Kazakhstan primarily exports oil and not gas (Paramonov & Stokov 2008b; 1), thus requiring Moscow to approach Astana in a manner that took this fact into consideration. Hence, the focus is not solely on infrastructure, although this also is mentioned in the passage above. However, it might also be suggested that this reflects the close overall Russo-Kazakh relationship, which then would move the energy cooperation from merely a business decision to a manifestation of amicable relations between the parts.

Perhaps merging these two aspects, president Medvedev went on to state that “the issues of integrating energy systems of Siberia and European Russia through Kazakhstan’s energy supply network and increasing capacities of supply lines from the Urals to Siberia via Kazakhstan are of particular relevance”, and that he thought it was a good idea to “ensure the parallel operation of the countries’ power systems⁴³” on a “compromise basis” (Prezident Rossii; 11/9 2009). We should here notice two things. First, the framing here highlights the integration of *energy systems* as opposed to a focus on just gas. This way, this can be interpreted as both a signal and an explanation for a more comprehensive Russian energy cooperation with Kazakhstan than what was the case with Turkmenistan. Second, Kazakhstan is here categorized as both an energy supplier *and* a transit state, something that might explain the Russian wish for a large-scale cooperation so as to place itself in a better position to monitor Astana’s moves. Third, the focus on mutual harmonization suggests a Russian wish of mutual rapprochement, but the focus on achieving compromises on energy cooperation can be read as a sign that Russia saw its position in Astana as somewhat stronger than in Ashgabat, where Russia’s impact was smaller.

Explaining the rationale for increasing the bilateral energy cooperation, Medvedev said:

With Kazakhstan we have practically speaking identical technological base, but it has to be admitted that this technology is old and obsolete. We need to modernize it, including through joint projects. We have similar technological and climatically conditions, so the conditions for working together are therefore very similar (*ibid.*).

An interesting contrast can here be seen in relation to the Russian framing of Turkmenistan. Whereas cooperation with the latter was explained with reference to the equal positioning in the energy structure of the parts, the focus here is on technological and geographical proximity, which connotes a need for a broader common platform. Hence, both framings have a normative element, but whereas the framing of Turkmenistan focuses on a structural normativity, we see in relation to Kazakhstan that Moscow employed what we might term a more cultural framing, based on a common *Weltanschauung*.

⁴³ Medvedev’s own phrasing was “обеспечение параллельной работы энергосистем”.

Summing up

It is tempting to argue that the Russian energy framing of Central Asia undergoing a change. On one hand Russia was eager to maintain a structural status quo in its energy relations with the region, in the sense that Moscow sought to maintain the Russian monopoly on Central Asian energy through its pipeline system. On the other, the decision makers in Moscow had to take the new realities into consideration, which in turn required a new pattern of interaction. Merging these two trends, Russia promoted use of Russian-controlled pipelines to transport Central Asian energy products which would allow Moscow to monitor developments in the region; while simultaneously also transform its relations with the Central Asian states into more business-like relationships. This would also allow Russia to promote the use of Russian industry.

In addition to this, Russia now needed to take greater notice of other powers', most notably China's, influence, leading Moscow to adopt a framing that focused on both regional and international cooperation and integration which Russia could use to keep track of the developments in the region. All of these framings point towards a rather pragmatic Russian assessment of the energy situation both in the region and in the wider energy complex. This way, we see that Russia's energy assessment of Central Asia was based on a wide variety of factors. These include the historical fact that the pipelines from the Soviet era ran from Central Asia to Russia; Central Asia's position in the energy market; interest in the region's energy resource from other actors, and lastly the potential for development of the regions' hydrocarbon resources which in turn would make Central Asia interesting for Russian industry.

3.5.1. The Russian Debate on Energy Security

Russia's energy: Importance and challenges

The importance of energy in Russian security thinking is increasing. An indication of this can be seen from the fact that the NSS mentions energy in relation to four different chapters; "Russia in the world community", "National defense", "Raising the quality of life", and "Economic growth". Energy security becomes even more vital for Russia when we also consider that Moscow to a large extent relies on export of its energy resources in order to fuel the economy. It is therefore not surprising that the ES 2030 stated that energy security

constitutes one of the main components for ensuring national security, relieving the state “from the threats to reliable supply of fuel and energy” (ES 2030; 28). Stating the foreign energy policy’s strategic objectives, the ES 2030 outlined three main aims: full-scale integration into the world energy market, enhancement of Russia’s position thereon and finally gaining the highest possible profit for the national economy (ibid; 55). Using the challenges outlined as a starting point, we will in the following examine the Russian understanding of energy security.

Market integration

Reflecting on Russia’s position on the global energy market, the ES 2030 stated that “currently Russia has already occupied one of the leading positions in the world system of energy resource turnover, it takes an active part in international cooperation in the sphere of fuel and energy resources production and their supply to energy markets” (ES 2030; 55). Given Moscow’s central position as the biggest exporter and producer of gas and second biggest exporter of oil, it is possible to assume that what was meant by the Russian wish for market integration was in fact to solidify Moscow’s position in the market. In practical terms, this meant that an important aspect of ensuring Russian energy security was ensuring *security of demand* through market access. This would create stability and predictability, which had the double advantage of both help promoting Russia as a stable and reliable supplier of energy, while also giving Moscow some relief in terms of concerns regarding income.

However, this is not to say that the integration had not solely been unproblematic for Moscow. This can be seen from the fact that Russia has been exposed to both market trends and changing market circumstances. Both of these points became very pertinent following the 2008 financial crisis when oil prices plummeted from \$147 a barrel in July 2008 to \$30 a barrel in December 2008 (Desai 2010; 145). Naturally, this also made any it very difficult for Moscow to enhance its position in the energy market. Due to this, it could be argued that the goal during the crisis was to retain market shares and secure revenues under the conditions of falling demand for energy and increased pressure from other energy producers competing on the same markets.

The Russian market integration’s main goal was also presented in the ES 2030:

Stable relationships with traditional consumers of Russian energy resources and forming just as stable relationships on new energy markets are the most important vectors of the country’s energy policy in

the sphere of global energy security provision in accordance with national interests of the country (ES 2030; 34)

As to the practical implementation of this, Russia sought to construe a framework for dialogue that included all parts of the energy chain. To this effect, president Medvedev presented the *Conceptual Approach to the New Legal Framework for Energy Cooperation* in April 2009. The framework drew upon the principles agreed upon during the 2006 G8 meeting in St. Petersburg, where energy security was an important theme. More specifically, emphasis was placed on predictability, responsibility, mutual trust and taking into consideration the interests of both consumers and producers. Outlining the Russian perspective on the new energy security concept, Medvedev said the following:

What is meant by this? It is an opportunity to create a new equal system of energy security where the interests of all the participants in the energy chain are well-balanced: countries and, accordingly, companies that produce oil, gas, as well as other energy products; transit countries; and consumer countries. This may be the most complex problem, but nonetheless this is the most important one. This is because we do not consider the existing regulations to be sufficient, and in some cases these are not beneficial for the Russian Federation. However, this does not mean that we are not going to comply with some rules that we ourselves have adopted. This simply means that we must think about the future (Prezident Rossii 16/11 2008).

In a sense, this reiterates the Russian wish to revise the international framework, as the proposed framework necessarily places a Russian perspective on energy relations. This could suggest that Moscow was discontent with the current format of energy dealings, promoting energy egalitarianism as a means to overcome a perceived (and presumably Western) bias in international energy dealings⁴⁴. In turn, this would place the energy security of exporters on an equal footing with the energy security of importers; thus in effect upgrading the security concerns of exporters.

⁴⁴ This can be seen from the fact that energy security as a concept has often been examined from the viewpoint of energy importers, which in turn have given security of supplies prevalence over security of demand. This also clarifies Russia's rationale for seeking to install a new framework that would bring these considerations on par. Although not solely being the reason for Russia's reluctance to wholly commit itself to the Russia-EU energy partnership, this relationship can serve to illustrate the Russian concerns. The overall objective of the partnership is stated to be the following: "To enhance the energy security of the European continent by binding Russian and the EU into a closer relationship in which all issues of mutual concern in the energy sector can be addressed while, at the same time, ensuring that the policies of opening and integrating energy markets are pursued" (Europa.eu 19/3 2009). We here see that Russia's energy security is framed as secondary to the EU's, which can be seen from the fact that European energy security is the main aspect to be achieved, while also move Russia in such a way as to make Moscow more susceptible and compatible to the EU.

Investments

It was also a clear objective to modernize the Russian energy sector. On this note, the FPC stated the following:

[The Russian Federation] continues to build up and modernize the capacity of the fuel and energy industry, hereby confirming its reputation of a responsible partner in the energy markets, while ensuring sustainable development of its economy and contributing to the maintenance of balanced world energy markets (FPC).

A seemingly vital aspect of this was investments in Russian energy infrastructure. That this indeed was a priority, if not to say requirement, can be seen by the fact that the ES 2030 mentions “investments” no less than 83 times. Forecasting the required capital investments into the development of the fuel and energy complex and energy supply, the ES 2030 stated that this would amount to some \$1,819–2,177 billion up to 2030 (ES 2030; 11).

In context of the global economic recession this undoubtedly posed a major challenge to the maintenance of Russia’s energy security, as failure to provide the sufficient funding for developing new energy fields could hamper Russia’s ability to produce and export energy resources. In turn, this would be damaging not only for Russia’s reputation as an energy supplier, but furthermore also lead to bring the global energy equilibrium out of balance. Potentially, this could aggravate the energy security of the countries belonging to other parts of the energy chain’s energy security, thus forcing these to look to diversify their own imports. In turn, this could be damaging for Russia.

In line with Putin’s “Russia first”-approach, there has been an increasing trend to limit foreign companies’ involvement in the Russian energy sphere to as large a degree as possible. This is due to the fact that the energy sector is considered one of the strategic sectors in Russian economy. This so-called “resource nationalism” can also be detected in Moscow’s adoption of the *Strategic Sectors Law* in 2008. The law placed limitations on foreign investments in 42 types of activities that are seen as having a strategic significance for national defense and state security, hereunder also exploration and development of subsoil areas, i.e. Russia’s energy fields. This seemed to signal that protectionism still was an important tool in ensuring Russian energy security.

At the same time, the obvious and precarious need for investments in the Russian energy sector has consequently led Moscow to at least partly ease its restrictions on foreign investments, as Russia's available capital to invest in new production has decreased considerably. Among the measures deliberated were, inter alia, a reduction of regulations on strategic industries, as well as more favorable taxation (Shadrina; 59). This shows the other side of the Russian energy security debate, namely the Russian need for Western capital and know-how in order to replace the energy fields that are in the process of being depleted.

An illustrating example of both of the points described above is the much-discussed Shtokmanovskoye field which is located in the Russian sector of the Barents Sea. The field contains vast resources, an estimation has been 3.7 trillion cubic meters which is more than three times Europe's annual consumption (Bloomberg 12/7 2007), but Gazprom is incapable of financing and developing this project on its own. This has lead Gazprom to invite two Western companies, France's Total and Norway's Statoil to participate in the project, but Gazprom is still the major shareholder. However, the cooperation is limited to the planning financing and construction of the field (statoil.com 7/10 2009), in effect meaning that the role of the non-Russian companies is limited to being suppliers of capital and technical solutions. Hence, we see that the companies have assets in the development of the field but not in the field's resources, this way rendering Gazprom in charge of the further developments.

Diversification

As we noted earlier in the thesis, the North-East Asian markets have gained importance in the Russian energy outlook, giving Moscow another outlet for its energy resources. This point becomes even more important when considering the economic boom these markets have experienced over the past years, as the Russian diversification to these markets helps ensuring Russian energy security by providing Russia with a stable and probably also increasing demand for its hydrocarbons. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that Europe still constitutes the largest market for Russian energy goods; being the final destination for 88 % of all Russian oil export and 70 % of Russian gas in 2009 (Minenergo/EC 2010; 2).

Diversification projects have also been initiated in relation to Russia's energy deliveries to Europe, two of which are the Nord Stream and South Stream. This has also been reiterated by Medvedev, who stated that "expansion of gas pipeline infrastructure [and] the implementation of such ambitious projects as the "Nord Stream" and "South Stream" contribute to the

diversification of Russian gas exports” was the main foreign energy policy tasks for Moscow (Vesti.ru 18/11 2008).

Not only would these projects increase the geographical number of flows Russian energy can take, but also serves to counter the EU-proposed Nabucco-pipeline, which is scheduled to circumvent Russia, thus in a sense cutting Russia out. Moreover, this would also help avoiding Russian reliance on transit through Ukraine and Belarus, the former being the greatest “problem” of the two. This can be seen from the various energy conflicts between Kiev and Moscow, the two most notable in 2006 and 2009, where reduction of Russian gas flows due to what Russia considered to be unreasonably cheap prices led to accusations from both Ukraine and the EU about Moscow employing energy as a political tool to force concessions from Kiev. Russia’s ability to act as a reliable supplier was also drawn into question, and debates on European energy diversification started. Hence, we see that from the point of view of an important energy supplier being, dependence on other countries for transit of its resources to key markets could be seen as a strategic challenge. This may explain Russia’s interests in realization of some projects that are to make Russia less dependent on transit countries. Based on this, we see that diversification has a double meaning in the Russian outlook: signifying both new pipelines to new customers as well as additional pipelines to preexisting importers.

Summing up

What we have seen in the last pages is that market access and security of demand serve as the starting point for Russian energy security. In addition, Moscow sought to attain a higher degree of market integration, which should be seen as a means to enhance Russia’s standing in the global energy market. At the same time, it was clear that the Russian energy infrastructure was in dire need of modernization. This situation became more difficult when the full implications of the financial crisis set in. In turn, this meant that Moscow was forced to look abroad to obtain the necessary financing. However, the Russians were still skeptical to give foreigners too large an influence over the Russian energy complex. In order to gain a larger control over Russia’s own energy destiny Russia sought to diversify their energy exports, both to the West and the East. We will in the following pages examine the role of Central Asia in fulfilling the Russian objectives.

3.5.2. Central Asia's Role in the Russian Energy Security Understanding

As we have touched upon earlier, Russia belongs to several of the groups in the energy chain. This means that Moscow needs to take into consideration Russia's interests as an energy producer, consumer and transit state simultaneously when deciding upon which energy security course to take. Central Asia plays a role in several of these considerations. Russia imports Central Asian gas to supplement its own consumption, and Central Asian hydrocarbons are exported through Russian pipelines to Europe and Asia, meaning that Russia serves as both a re-exporter and transit area for Central Asia's energy. Last but not least, both Russia and Central Asia are net energy exporters (see tables below), meaning that they are de facto competitors on the international energy market. Therefore, Russia has to approach Central Asia in such a manner as to balance the different considerations outlined above, while still fulfilling the main principles of ensuring energy demand and market access. In practical terms, it seems possible to argue that the main role of the Central Asian states has been related to two of the abovementioned aspects, namely to ensure the aims of market integration and diversification. These will be discussed in the following.

Figure 3: Central Asian and Russian proved natural gas reserves⁴⁵

	At the end of 2009	At the end of 2010	
	Trillion cubic meters	Trillion cubic meters	Share of world total
Kazakhstan	1.9	1.8	1.0 %
Turkmenistan	8.0	8.0	4.3 %
Uzbekistan	1.6	1.6	0.8 %
Total Central Asia	11.5	11.4	6.1 %
Russia	44.4	44.8	23.9 %

Figure 4: Kazakhstani and Russian proved oil reserves⁴⁶

	At the End of 2009	At the End of 2010	
	Thousand Million Barrels	Thousand Million Barrels	Share of World Total
Kazakhstan	39,8	39,8	2.9 %
Russia	76,7	77,4	5.6 %

⁴⁵ Data for both tables retrieved from BP (2010).

⁴⁶ Although both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also possess some oil reserves these are modest; each constituting a share of less than 0.05 % of the global total. Due to this, they have been omitted from the index.

Russo-Central Asian energy integration

As was shown in section 3.1.4., one aspect concerning Russia's energy framing of Central Asia related to the creation of a regional Eurasian energy space. Although not evoking any notions of a neo-Soviet approach, something that was clear from the fact that this space was to be construed on the basis of a realpolitikal and business-like manner that took into account the growing power of the Central Asian states. Naturally, it would be erroneous to equate this with a direct Russian control over Central Asia's energy resources. Rather, the reintegration would allow Russia to influence or at least monitor decision making processes in the Central Asian states. Although the newly built Chinese pipelines had disrupted the Russian control of Central Asia's energy resources, Russian still had an infrastructural edge. By further integration with the Central Asian states Russia could maintain its preferential access to the region's energy sources. In turn, this would allow Moscow to control the direction and volumes of energy exports from Central Asia. Moreover, the integration could be an opening for Moscow to display a Russian power to act, hereby legitimizing the Russian foreign policy framing of Russia as being a regional driving force.

Given that Russia and Central Asia occupy partly similar positions in the energy chain as producers and exporters, it is obvious that the proposed Russo-Central Asian energy integration does not include any energy end markets besides the Russian one. Rather, by being able to monitor and influence other energy producers, Russia could retain some control over the Central Asian states' energy policies, and in the prolongation of this also over energy importers.

Diversification

In line with what we outlined above, the Russian goal of diversifying its exports should be seen as a mechanism for ensuring that Russia had access to markets which Russian oil and gas could be sent to. By establishing stronger bonds with the Asian markets Russia could decrease its export dependence on the European market while also gaining increased access to the increasingly growing Asian one. However, this also meant being able to keep an eye on the actions of other energy producers. By being able to coordinate its actions with Central Asia, Moscow could dissuade the Central Asian states from establishing stronger bonds with the EU. It could also be argued that the Russian endorsement of Central Asian energy export diversification towards Asia serves as a point in favor for just this, as it ties up energy

resources that otherwise could be exported to the European market, where Russia had a strong standing.

This underlines the importance for establishing closer bonds with Central Asia, as this arguably would make it easier for Russia to convince the Central Asian states of this move. However, it should also be noted that this also was the result of pragmatism: The rise of China made Beijing's presence in Central Asia almost unavoidable. By spurring the Central Asian states to orient themselves towards the east, Moscow signaled that there was room for both parts on the Asian market, something that becomes even clearer when taking into consideration the fact that growing development of the Asian economies would trigger a larger demand for energy. This meant that both parts' market shares could be protected. At the same time, and as noted above, Russia wanted to keep its preeminence on the European market to a large an extent as possible.

Chapter 4: Central Asia in the EU Discourse on Energy Security

4.1. The EU-Central Asian relationship in context

Introduction

The fall of the Soviet Union meant that the EU nearly overnight had to establish relations with 15 new states, many of which that the EU never had dealt with directly before. Thus, unlike Russia, whose primary task in relation to the Central Asian countries was to re-frame the relationships, Brussels needed to start anew; creating a fundament upon which future relations could be based. The EU-Central Asia relationships have moved through several phases and since the republics' independence; all of which have led to a specific framing of the region. This is what will be addressed in the following pages. This will be done by examining the relationship in three stages; the first running from 1991 to 1995, the second from 1995 to 2007, and, lastly, the third stage will deal with the relationship between 2007 and 2008.

First stage (1991-1995)

The Central Asian states were officially recognized by the EU member countries already in 1992 and the larger EU members opened diplomatic representations in most of the states in the region shortly after. One of the first EU attempts to approach the former Soviet states were through the *Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States Program* (abbreviated TACIS). Implemented by the European Commission (EC), the objective was to help the CIS members making the transition from Soviet-style planned economy to free and market-based economies and the development of democratic institutions⁴⁷. This way, the program had both an economic and normative side to it. From an EU perspective this had the double advantage of promoting European norms and principles such as democracy and human rights, whilst also seeking to transform the Central Asian states into potential trade partners through the focus of market economy.

⁴⁷ Except for the Central Asian states, the TACIS-program also included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and Mongolia (covered by the program from 1991 to 2003).

TACIS worked as a financing program, through which regional programs and projects were backed⁴⁸. One of these was the so-called *Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia* (TRACECA) in 1993, where the objective was to establish a regional network of transport routes in order to develop economic relations, trade and transport communications between the East and the West (Yazdani 2008; 25). This also meant promoting a trade pattern that went counter to the traditional one the Central Asian countries had experienced during the Soviet period, where trade largely was facilitated between south and north (Matveeva 2006; 86-87). This indicated that the EU recognized the region's potential as an equal partner in terms of trade, whilst also pointing out that the Central Asian states could benefit from cooperation with the more powerful and economically superior EU.

However, the TACIS-approach was criticized for being too fragmented and project-driven rather than strategic. On a bilateral basis, steps were taken towards the adoption of directives for starting negotiations of *Partnership and Cooperation Agreements* (PCAs) with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan respectively, and later also with Uzbekistan⁴⁹ (Hunter 1996; 156). By dealing with the Central Asian states on a bilateral basis, the EU could also help bolster their independence, which in turn might make them more willing to accept European influence in the region. These agreements were designed to formalize bilateral cooperation and create a common platform and framework, and covered a range of topics; from economics and trade to political and human rights (ibid; 156). Additionally, the PCAs contained a social dimension, stipulating that the agreements could be voided if human rights are violated. This may work as a mechanism for putting pressure on the Central Asian states (Lamulin 2002; 214-215).

However, despite these pushes the EU engagement at this point was rather limited and cautious, being rather *ad-hoc* and issue-based (Matveeva 2006; 85). On overall, Neil Melvin writes that the EU's engagement in the region in this period "remained modest, lacking both a

⁴⁸ On overall, five sectors were identified as priority areas for assistance: training, energy (including nuclear safety), transport, support for industrial and commercial enterprises, and food production and distribution (International Crisis Group 2006; 11).

⁴⁹ The PCAs with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were concluded in 1996; and with Turkmenistan in 1998. However, Turkmenistan's PCA was not ratified, and has consequently not come into force, making Turkmenistan at the time of writing the only Central Asian country without a PCA. Tajikistan's PCA was not finalized until 2004 due to the civil war in the country (Melvin (ed.); 2; EC External Relations 2010)

clear sense of political priorities and the resources necessary to have a significant impact on the countries of the region” (Melvin (ed.); 2-3).

Second stage (1995-2007)

The EU’s viewing of Central Asia changed considerably in the mid-1990s, as Brussels recognized the enormous potential in Central Asia’s oil and gas reserves. Due to this, the policies pursued at this point were mainly organized around energy related issues, most notably how to extract and transport oil and gas from the region to the EU members (Yazdani; 249). To this purpose, the program *Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe* (INOGATE) was launched in 1995. This project was centered on four key areas: (1) Converging of the energy markets of the member states on the basis of the principles of the EU internal energy market, (2) enhancing energy security by addressing the issues of energy export/imports, supply diversification, energy transit and energy demand, (3) supporting sustainable energy development, and finally (4) attracting investment for energy projects of common and regional interest (EU Integration 2011).

However, a sole focus on the establishment of commercial ties turned out to be an insufficient regional approach. By the late 1990s the region, sometimes referred to as the “neighbors of our neighbors”, had also become a security concern for Brussels. An example of this came in August 1999 when Kyrgyzstan was invaded by Islamic insurgents, thus threatening to destabilize the whole region (Lamulin; 228). Adding to this, the Central Asian countries experienced socio-political unrest and a surge in drug traffic. In sum, this affected the EU as it led to suboptimal cooperation, increased the danger of disruptions regarding the transport of energy and increased the flow of drugs in the EU. The initial EU response came in 2000 in the form of an Action Plan to combat the flow of drugs through Central Asia (Yazdani; 251). However, in the bigger picture the Action Plan alone was not sufficient in order to wholly address the region’s challenges.

This approach changed following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, which turned Central Asia into a geopolitical hotspot. The emergence of internationally powerful actors in the area necessitated the EU to redefine its relations with the countries in the region. At this point, the EU was concerned with three main security issues in relation to Central Asia; Islamic radicalism, terrorism and regional conflict. Furthermore, Brussels worried about spillover-effects to other countries in the region if these

issues were not dealt with in an adequate manner (Yazdani; 251). The EU member states sought to prevent this by providing large-scale bilateral assistance in order to secure the Central Asian states. Border issues were here prioritized, which made the *Border Management Program in Central Asia* (BOMCA) emerge as a flagship in the EU approach (Matveeva 2006; 88). This also helped strengthen the EU's *Central Asian Drug Assistance Program* (CADAP), which had been launched in the late 1990s but had failed to set its mark on the ground (Melvin (ed.); 4).

Steps were also taken to enhance the regional dialogue regarding energy security. The EU, afraid of being too reliant on Arab oil, saw Caspian oil to be a good alternative source (Rakhimov 2010; 3). The Baku Initiative, launched in 2004, merged INOGATE's focus on energy and TRACECA's emphasis on transport, and aimed at "progressive integration" of the respective parts transport networks "in accordance with EU and international legal and regulatory frameworks" (EC 2010a). Furthermore, a new Energy Road Map was agreed upon in November 2006. Its implementation paved the way for a comprehensive legal and regulatory governing and integrated EU-Black Sea-Caspian Sea common energy market based on the EU Community *acquis* (Rakhimov; 3)⁵⁰. This was even more important in light of the Ukrainian-Russian gas conflict that emerged in January the same year. By streamlining and enhancing energy relations with Central Asia, the EU seems to have wanted to create a counterweight to Russia's dominance regarding energy.

Unfortunately for Brussels, the security situation in the region also became more precarious during this period. In May 2005 a large number of protesters were killed by Uzbek state security forces in what has become known as the Andizhan massacre. On one side Uzbekistan, with its relatively large population, its geopolitical position in the heart of Central Asia and its importance for energy issues occupied an important position in the EU approach, and Brussels worried, as we noted, about spill-over effects and instability. On the other side, this called EU's normative side into play, making it necessary to take some sort of action. The result was that the EU opted to impose sanctions on Uzbekistan, while regional cooperation was set to proceed as normal (ibid; 4, Matveeva 2006; 90). This marked that adherence to rule of law was a necessary condition for continued cooperation, while also framing the EU as a

⁵⁰ The road map was agreed by the European Commission and governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Russia (to act as an observer).

normative power. Despite this, the incident was largely interpreted in geopolitical terms; with Russia and China seen as advancing their hold on Central Asia at the expense of the West (Melvin (ed.); 4).

On overall, we see that a more sector-driven EU approach emerged in this period, with a specific focus on energy and security related issues, whilst also seeking to maintain regional stability. The complexities of the challenges the region met coupled with the increased geopolitical weight of the Central Asian states, meant that Brussels needed to choose its approach wisely. In practical terms, the focus on inter-governmental bodies in order to ensure effective cooperation and mutual benefits for both sides was continued, while violations of EU norms were struck down on.

Third stage (2007-2008)

2007 saw the launching of the *Strategy for a New Partnership* (in the following named the Strategy), a more far-reaching and coherent EU initiative vis-à-vis Central Asia. The initiative reflected both the new geopolitical position of Central Asia; the implications of this in relation to the region's security and energy situation, as well as the perceived weakening of Western power in the region (ibid; 4). This point was also stressed by the Union in the 2010 Joint Progress Report⁵¹ (JPR), where it was stated that the adoption of the Strategy was due to "the realization by the EU of the growing importance of Central Asian countries for the EU" (2010 JPR; 2). Neil Melvin and Jos Boonstra noted that the introduction of the Strategy signaled a fundamental shift in the EU's relations with Central Asia, for the first time "linking general political goals to a concrete working prospectus in the region" (Melvin & Boonstra 2008; 1).

Set to unfold both regionally and bilaterally, the EU sought to use this platform as a means to widen the scope of its engagement in the area. The "new" relations were to cover a wide range of issues, including energy, security, environment, transport, education, democracy and human rights (ibid; 5, Yazdani; 253). This integrated matters of development, security, crisis management and political dialogue into one overall structure, hereby marking the interdependence between these issues⁵². Also, the Strategy called for a higher degree of

⁵¹ The JPR is filed under Council of the European Union and the European Commission (2010) in the bibliography.

⁵² The notion of interdependence was also supported by German Minister of State Gernot Erler, who presented the following three principles as the fundament for the new Strategy: (1) Stability in Central Asia is vital for peace and prosperity in the whole region around the Caspian Sea. Peace in Afghanistan cannot be achieved

political dialogue with all five Central Asian states (Rakhimov; 4). This way, the comprehensiveness of the Strategy signaled that the EU saw Central Asia as a long-term commitment. This comprehensiveness also brought with it positive synergy effects in the EU's eyes, as it hindered monopolization of Central Asia by either Russia or China, which both addressed the area through a narrower focus on energy and security (Melvin (ed.); 5). Accordingly, Brussels sought to present itself as a holistic or "complete" partner by merging both interests and ideas into one overall structure. This can be contrasted by the Russian approach, which was more issue-specific.

From the preceding pages it is clear that Brussels' relations with the Central Asian states have gone through various phases. In the beginning the main features of the EU's engagement was a project-based approach that sought to find concrete goals to the challenges the region faced. The discovery of energy resources in the area made the EU presence more visible. However, the region also became increasingly more complex, illustrated by the growing number of potential security threats. Following the 9/11 terror attacks the EU's engagement increased, but in terms of practical measures Brussels continued to address specific threats and aspects through technical assistance rather than prepare an overall strategy. This changed, however, in 2007. The launching of the new Central Asian Strategy signaled a move away from a project-based approach to a more strategic approach, thus serving as a recognition of the growing importance of Central Asia not only in the European outlook, but also in global politics.

4.2. Central Asia in the EU's Foreign Policy

Introduction

Due to the comprehensiveness of the EU's Central Asia approach the aforementioned 2010 JPR underscored the need for regular reviews of the implementation of the Strategy, so as to indicate within which spheres of commitment progress had been achieved; and where additional measures ought to be taken. The EU experiences for the first years are described in the same JPR, and due to this the following pages will to a large extent be based on this document.

without stability in Central Asia. (2) This goal can only be attained by gradually establishing democracy and the rule of law as well as guaranteeing the observance of minimum human rights standards in the societies affected. (3) The countries of Central Asia are becoming increasingly important for German and EU energy security, due to the energy resources' strategic significance (Erler 2007; 5).

For the sake of orderliness have the areas of the EU's engagement have been subsumed under three separate categories, according to the goal of interaction with the states in the region: a normative one (human rights, good governance and cultural dialogue⁵³); a technical one (education, environment and economic development); and finally an interest-based one (energy and security). In accordance with the theme of the thesis the interest-based category will be dealt with later on.

The normative dimension

Human rights, rule of law, good governance, and democratization

Commenting on the normative development in Central Asia over the past few years, the JPR noted:

Although some positive developments have taken place, such as the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan and some judicial procedure reforms, the situation in the region remains worrying. Despite regional differences, reports on the use of torture remain frequent, severe restrictions on the freedom of expression and of the media continue, as do arbitrary restrictions to freedom of association and assembly. Little progress can be noted as regards judicial independence and fair trial rights (2010 JPR; 7).

The picture presented of the region here is rather stark. We here see that democratic ideals were being employed by the EU as a benchmark and a goal for progress. This also explains the discontented tone in the statement, as the EU was displeased with the lack of progress towards these ideals. This can also be exemplified by examining the Freedom House's ratings of Central Asia from 2007 to 2010, which shows that none of the states have improved their standing on democracy and human rights. In fact, Kyrgyzstan, the only state that was *not* considered "Not free" before the implementation of the EU Strategy, moved from its initial category "Partly free" to "Not free" in 2009 (Freedom House 2011).

This lead to a framing of the Central Asian states are here framed as -at best- semi-totalitarian; lacking both the ability and will to adjust in accordance with Brussels' wishes. Moreover, we here see that the EU sought to move the region towards a more liberal/egalitarian direction, but with very limited success within this field in practical terms.

⁵³ Due to a lack of relevant coverage in the official EU discourse, the cultural aspect will not be addressed in the following. The absence of initiatives in this sphere is in itself noteworthy, as it suggests that cultural dialogue was not a prioritized task for Brussels.

This raised difficulties for the EU, which saw observance of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratization as important underpinnings for “the long-term political stability and economic development of Central Asia” (ibid;.8). Furthermore, a picture of Brussels as an advocate of reforms is conveyed, which consequently turns the Central Asian states into an area where these norms are to be implemented. However, as was also reflected in the JPR quote above, this push for reforms did not necessarily manifest itself in a welcoming of the EU norms in Central Asia. In order to remedy this, the EU seems to have employed framing that suggested that the current situation and leadership led the Central Asian states to work on a suboptimal level. This could be mended by adhering to EU principles.

Hence, from an EU point of view Central Asia does not fulfill its potential, leaving the region in a state of underperformance. In this context, the emphasis placed on Kazakhstan’s 2010 OSCE Chairmanship is interesting. This was hailed as “an historical opportunity to bring Europe and Central Asia closer to each other through the commitments and values they share”, something that could be seen as an attempt to create a bridgehead between the parts (ibid; 3). This is also interesting in light of the Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), where Kazakhstan was the only one of the Central Asian countries that markedly improved its position in the period 2007 to 2010; from being placed as number 150 out of 179 countries in 2007 to 105. place out 179 countries in 2010. The remaining Central Asian states, however, only experienced minor changes, and then mostly for the worse (Transparency International 2011). Hence, Brussels frames Kazakhstan as being in a middle position between the EU and the other Central Asian states, thus being somewhat more similar to Brussels than the other states in the region. In turn, by winning Astana over, the EU could also gain a gateway for introducing EU norms in the region.

Despite the Central Asian “underachievement” described above Brussels maintained that attempts had been made, and were continuously being made, to change the situation. The establishment of “structured human rights dialogues” with all the five states in the region had allowed the conveyance of “good European practices, experience and policies in this field” (ibid; 8). This presupposes that the practices as they were executed in Europe were in some sense qualitatively better than the Central Asian procedures. In turn, this says something about the perceived relation of strength between parts. That the EU was the strong part among the two was also apparent in the focus on exploring the scope for practical cooperation where

the perceived goal was “sharing EU experiences in human rights and democratization issues” (ibid; 8). Brussels here appears as a “sharer”, that is, holder of knowledge, whereas the Central Asian states are the receivers of this know-how.

It could also be argued that the EU, through its focus on creating a common normative platform, sought to transform or change Central Asia by making the countries in the region adopt measures that would make them more similar to the EU. This is interesting, as it also seems to assume that the region’s societal structures in general ought to be changed if a solid fundament for stability and development is to be developed. In line with this, Brussels also addressed the troublesome situation for the Central Asian countries’ civil societies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); stating that “a developed, independent civil society and an independent media are vital for social and economic development” (ibid; 8).

In terms of the implementation of the normative aspect of the Strategy, the 2010 JPR stated that for the plans to succeed this also required “a genuine commitment of the partner countries to engage in meaningful, effective reform” (ibid; 10). In effect this transmits part of the responsibility for the implementation of the reforms over to the Central Asian side. This signals that Brussels can only encourage reforms, while their implementation was the responsibility of the individual countries in question.

The technical dimension

Education

Explaining its involvement in the Central Asian education sector, the EC noted that “education institutions play a key role in society contributing to sustainable development, and economic growth which is why the EU regards education and research as strategic sectors for development cooperation with Asia (EC 2011a)”. This was also an area in which Brussels “has extensive experience and expertise” (2010 JPR; 11).

This reiterates the structure outlined earlier, where the EU is in possession of knowledge and the Central Asian countries are to benefit from this knowledge through interaction with Brussels. In this context it could therefore be argued that Brussels sought to “educate” Central Asia, which was seen as lagging behind the developed Europe. This frames the EU educational approach as something for Central Asia to aspire to; constituting, from Brussels’

point of view, a qualitative improvement. In turn, a Central Asian accession to this approach would represent a step forward in terms of progress and development in the region. This way, the education framing continued to emphasize the normative element in the EU approach. Also, it is interesting to note the repeated accentuation of Kazakhstan as a regional spearhead. Moving Astana into what we can call a European sphere correlates with Brussels' wish to bridge cultural and normative differences between Europe and Central Asia⁵⁴. Hence, the education program was designed to increase EU-Central Asian commonalities through Central Asian adherence to European norms.

Economic development, trade and investment

Pointing out the EU's economic importance for the Central Asian states the JPR noted that the EU remained "a leading trade partner for the region and the main trade partner for its biggest economy, Kazakhstan" (2010 JPR; 14). In effect, this firmly places the EU in the forefront, if not center, of both Central Asia's and Astana's trade relations. The EU was also determined in creating a picture of itself as a benefactor to the region was also apparent as the EU discourse highlighted that a significant increase in EU assistance had made the EU one of the leading donors in the region (ibid; 4). Hence, this framing can be read as a signal that mutually beneficial arrangements can be continued and developed further, but this is based on the premise that the European direction is being prioritized. This conditionality has two functions from an EU perspective; placing a certain pressure on Central Asia, and at the same time accentuate the advantages that could be gained through enhanced cooperation with Brussels.

This framing could also be read in context of the geopolitical situation. China had, by flexing its economic muscles, gained foothold in the region, something that naturally made Beijing a competitor to Brussels in terms of trade. By framing the EU-Central Asian economic relationship as the single most important regional economic collaboration the EU could

⁵⁴ This point is also explicitly referred to in the JPR, where it says: "It is noteworthy that Kazakhstan has become a member of the European Cultural Convention, which means that Kazakhstan is now a fully-fledged member of the Steering Committee for Education and of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research of the Council of Europe and that it can take part of in all activities in the education field (2010 JPR; 11)". This framing highlights that Kazakhstan is indeed a part of the European community. Apart from the aforementioned "bridgehead aspect", this also helped Brussels in the "claiming" of a key geopolitical player, which in turn would make it harder for any great power contender to win Astana over again.

manage a dual task: retaining its position as Central Asia's main trade partner by drawing the Central Asian states closer, while also keep China at arm's length.

As with Russia, China pursued "pure" business relations, meaning that Beijing did not draw attention to improving the internal normative situation in the Central Asian countries within such spheres as for instance economic freedom. In light of China's increasing geopolitical weight, it could be argued that this also forced Brussels to prioritize business over reform work inside Central Asia. Exemplifying this, we might examine the Heritage Foundation/Wall Street Journal's Index of Economic Freedom (IEF)⁵⁵, which examines the degree of economic freedom in the world's countries⁵⁶. Since 2007 the situation within this field has improved somewhat for such countries as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but this progress is more than offset by declines elsewhere. Although parts of this decline may be attributed to the effects of the 2008 financial crisis, this may also indicate a lack of fruition in terms of the stated EU engagement. Despite this, the JPR noted that "there still is scope for strengthening EU-Central Asian trade and investment relations" (ibid; 14). Brussels pursued this through two channels; mutual projects and promoting accession to the WTO. Both will be briefly assessed in the following.

In terms of regional projects, the EU aim was to encourage "regional economic integration". Apart from the obvious aim of generating economic gains, Brussels could here appear as a moderator or even peacemaker in the region by virtue of its role as a facilitator of this cooperation. This reiterates the perceived distance and discrepancy between the collected and stable Europe and the potentially disarrayed Central Asia. By keeping its trade partners close not only to Brussels but also to one another, the EU could here control the developments. Furthermore, this could also promote regional stability, making Brussels appear as a facilitator of this as well.

The other EU mechanism was to promote accession to the WTO as a key objective for the Central Asian states. The EU supported this move "as an important catalyst for economic reform and a basis for the further development of trade and economic relations" (ibid; 15). In

⁵⁵ See bibliography for links to the web sites with the tables for the relevant years.

⁵⁶ In this context, economic freedom is understood as: "All liberties and rights of production, distribution, or consumption of goods and services. The highest form of economic freedom should provide an absolute right of property ownership; fully realized freedoms of movement for labor, capital, and goods; and an absolute absence of coercion or constraint of economic liberty beyond the extent necessary for citizens to protect and maintain liberty itself" (Miller & Kim 2011; 20).

light of what we have discerned so far, it seems reasonable to suggest that also tool for introducing Western rules and regulations to the Central Asian states. Thus, the WTO serves as an institutionalization of the assimilation process that the EU sought to promote. In this context it is also worth mentioning the particular interest taken by the EU in Kazakhstan joining the WTO. As the largest trade partner to the EU in the region, “the EU takes a significant interest in seeing Kazakhstan join the WTO soon in order to have a shared framework for strengthening economic ties” (ibid; 15).

Transport

In the field of transport priority was given to the South East pan-European Corridor through the Caspian Sea, supported by the TRACECA program. The corridor remained important even though “some Central Asian countries attach relatively more importance to north-bound routes”, a clear hint of Russia’s involvement in the region (ibid; 18). In addition to this, the JPR stated that “cross-Caspian routes are rapidly gaining significance as greater quantities of oil become available for shipping”, thus highlighting the link between transport and energy (ibid; 18). Apart from indicating that Brussels saw Moscow, not China, as the main competitor within this field, the correlation between the increasing importance of transport routes and the growing available quantities of oil could be read as a signal that increasing energy production in Central Asia could make the area more subjected to great power struggles in the future. This way, the mentioning of the increasing significance of westward-bound routes serves a specific function in the EU framing, as it places Europe as the main destination of Central Asia’s energy resources. Given that the Central Asian states are net energy exporters and Europe is a net importer, this has the effect of underlining Europe’s importance to Central Asia as a buyer of energy products; while also placing Russia in a secondary position in relation to energy matters. This way, the transport framing also underscores the geopolitical importance of energy, something that consequentially is emphasized by Brussels as well.

Environment

EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel noted in an interview that environmental issues were of great importance for Brussels in its relations with the Central Asian states. Outlining the reasons for this, Morel stated that this was so

not only because they are of unquestionable importance for the countries of Central Asia, but also because the consequences of environmental processes in the region might stretch as far as Europe. They can be seen as a common challenge for the EU and Central Asia. Besides, the Europeans subscribe to the philosophy that the environment is a global system and we all are responsible for it, regardless of where on the planet the damage occurs. Addressing environmental problems, including in Central Asia, can be seen as part of our concern for the World that we all live in and that we will leave to the future generations (European Dialogue 2008).

First, we can here note that the proposed cure for the problem suggests that a comprehensible solution is needed, including both the EU and the Central Asian states. This way, a sense of community was being constructed; highlighting that all the parts were required to act in order to assume control over the situation. Related to this, it is here hinted that Brussels could and should involve itself on outside the Union in order to protect the common good, i.e. a habitable and sustainable environment. This has the function of justifying the EU's presence, by pointing to the righteousness that constituted the foundation for the EU's engagement. This way, the EU took the moral high ground in relation to environmental issues.

Also, Central Asia here is framed as a potential problem. Hence, in order to stop the problems from reaching Europe, these ought to be contained within its "region of origin". Based on this we can see that Central Asia here is framed as a possible danger to Europe. Concurrent with this, it also seems as though a certain dualism exists in the EU approach; wavering between framing the EU-Central Asian relationship within this sphere as a fellowship or as a hierarchical relationship with the holistically solution oriented EU and its protégé, i.e. Central Asia. However, an interesting question relates to whether improvement actually was noticeable following the increasing EU interest in Central Asia. The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) paints a somewhat ambiguous picture of just this⁵⁷. Most of the Central Asian states experienced improved ratings from 2006 to 2008, but this progress was more than offset by sharply decreasing trajectories in the period from 2008 to 2010. Based on this, one may again ask whether the EU presence really had an impact on the ground in terms of improving the region's situation.

Summing up

Despite EU efforts to implement Western norms in Central Asia, something that in praxis meant approximation to the West through adherence of Western norms and principles, were

⁵⁷ See the bibliography for links to the pertinent tables.

unsuccessful. This was framed as being due to Central Asian reluctance and inability to do so. First, we here see that Brussels sought to appear as a benefactor to the region, which construes a hierarchy between the advanced EU and the less-developed Central Asian countries. Second, we see that by extending this argument, the Central Asia states are depicted as being somewhat dysfunctional and because of this in need of European assistance.

This also seems to serve as a rationale for the implementation of technical dimension of the EU approach, as it construes a framework for enhancing commonalities between the parts. Through investments and other financial support, seeking to introduce market principles and fostering regional cooperation, Brussels could bring the Central Asian closer to the EU and hinder regional turmoil in the process. If we continue this line of thought, we also see that this approach had a geopolitical aspect to it: by implementing these measures the EU could draw the Central Asian states into Brussels' realm, which in turn would make it more difficult for the other players in the region to draw the regional states into their sphere of influences. Hence, although the Central Asian states still were seen as lesser developed than the EU and therefore in need of assistance, the focus on EU-Central Asian cooperation and integration has the function of placing the parts on a more equal stance structurally, here constituting a united position.

4.3. Central Asia in the EU's Security Discourse

Threat perceptions

Central Asia's growing geopolitical role also increased the importance of regional security. The JPR reflected an awareness this as it stated that cooperation within this field was of "growing importance" in the EU-Central Asian relations; pointing to the EU-Central Asia Forums on security in Paris in September 2008 and again in Brussels in a year later as demonstrations of just this (2010 JPR; 21). That Central Asia faced a broad range of complex security challenges was also evident from the fact that the EU itself called for an expansion of the concept of security to fit the EU engagement in the region. As an example of this, suffice it to list some of the issues addressed by the abovementioned Forums: the threat of terrorism and extremism, the fight against human and drug trafficking, non-proliferation, as well as issues related to energy, water and environmental security (ibid; 26; Council of the European Union 15/9 2009; Presidency of the Council of the European Union 25/11 2008). In terms of

the EU's main Central Asian operational activities in the security field, these were mainly centered on the issues of border management and drugs. Because of these issues' centrality in the EU discourse, the following pages will mainly be using these themes as a backdrop.

Security political community or Central Asia as security buffer?

Addressing the security situation in Central Asia, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner said:

Central Asia is a region of increasing importance for us and we need the Central Asian countries to be strong partners in the fight against shared challenges. Therefore, we have considerably increased the intensity in our relations over the last months, notably through our Central Asia strategy. During my visit to Central Asia earlier this year I underlined the importance of stability for a region that is so close to Afghanistan and our commitment to work with the Central Asian countries to achieve this. I am happy to see that a security partnership is a very important element of this reinforced cooperation (Ferrero-Waldner 17/9 2008).

To the same effect, the JPR also stated that "the EU and Central Asian countries share a common interest in tackling these [developments] and the destabilizing effects they can have both in the EU and Central Asia" (2010 JPR; 21). The statement highlights that the precarious security situation in the region was important for Brussels for several reasons; both in terms of potential spillover effects to Europe due to the transnational character of many of the threats and challenges mentioned and as a stumbling block to Brussels' stated strategic goals of securing and stabilizing Central Asia. Last but not least, this framing made it possible for the EU and the Central Asian states to construe a united front against unwanted developments, hereby creating a sense of community. This allowed the Union to side with Central Asia almost regardless of the nature of the threat or challenge at hand: if this was due to internal Central Asian factors, Brussels could assist the states in overcoming the threat; whereas any threats emanating outside Central Asia would see the Central Asian states and the EU working together for the common good.

Although these categorizations by no means are mutually exclusive, we may illustrate a tendency to this type of thinking by relating them to Afghanistan, something that also was reflected in Ferrero-Waldner's statement above. The JPR noted that the fragile situation in Afghanistan had "increased the potential spillover of extremism from Afghanistan into Central Asia", which renewed the importance of cooperation in order to combat terrorism and extremism (ibid; 23). Hence, the EU-Central Asian "united front" can be seen as operating on

two levels; employing proactive and preventive measures in Central Asia to hinder radicalization, as well as seeking to isolate Central Asia from Afghanistan by containing the Afghan threats inside Afghanistan. Indirectly, the former of these levels may potentially lead to a viewing of Central Asia as “problem area”, turning the region into a European buffer zone. As with Russia, it would here seem that also the EU sought to employ a concentric security approach to Central Asia, seeking to contain and minimize the problems in the region rather than risking that they would spread towards Europe.

Regarding Brussels’ involvement in the spheres of border management and drugs the EU pointed out that it was “heavily engaged” in the region as “one of the leading donors in the area of border management and combating drug trafficking with its BOMCA Program and CADAP” (ibid; 21). First, we can here notice the use of the word “donor”, which in this context evokes a notion of something being handed down from an affluent actor to a more needy part. In addition, it is interesting to note that Brussels referred to the implemented programs as “its” as opposed to “joint”, hereby implying that the EU was the architect behind the programs, and Central Asia is the area in which the program is being executed.

Program implementation

As to the implementation of the EU’s regional security programs Brussels stated that it had “proceeded well and has made a significant contribution to building modern border infrastructure in order to help provide border security as well as to facilitate licit border traffic and thereby promote regional cooperation and trade” (ibid; 21). It is here created a linkage between the modernization of the Central Asian countries’ border systems, which was brought about by the EU; an increase in the legality of cross-border activities; and enhanced regional cooperation. This way, Brussels helped developing Central Asia by directly addressing the transnational character of many of the threats. In addition to reaffirm the containment aspect of the EU framing, Brussels here emerges as a security provider to the beneficiary Central Asia. This way, the EU contributed to the region’s stability.

Moreover, the EU saw introduction of a “European-style integrated border management practices” as one of Brussels’ regional key objectives (ibid; 21). This would seem to foster intra-regional cooperation through increased trade and investment flows. Additionally, the European-ness that constituted the fundament for the system would also ensure approximation to the EU in terms of both norms (togetherness) and technique (implementation of the EU

structure/system). This would ensure that the Union's security model is pointed out as an ideal to which the Central Asian states could and should adhere.

Related to the problematic drug situation in the area the JPR noted that the EU-Central Asia Drug Action Plan had been revised in order to better fit the current context, updating "the policy orientations that are at the core of the reform processes in the region and the EU-Central Asia cooperation agenda, and is supported by the various technical assistance programs under implementation" (ibid; 22). This passage again shows that there is no clear-cut distinction between the normative and technical dimension of the EU approach to Central Asia, in the sense that reform processes are to be supported by technical assistance so as to merge into a single and comprehensive approach to Central Asia. This also underlines that Brussels saw Central Asia as a complex security challenge, which in turn defied any easy solutions to the region's challenges.

Drugs: Central Asia as transit area and producer

The complexity described above can also be exemplified with reference to the JPR, where the following was stated:

Given that the region remains a significant corridor for drug trafficking, the prevention of drug use in Central Asian countries has become an increasingly important aspect of EU assistance programs while the increased production of drugs in the region has made the issue of precursor trafficking a crucial one to address (ibid; 22).

We see that the Central Asia's geographical position as a transit site is highlighted, a framing which is consistent with the 2000 Action Plan. What is new here is the focus on increased drug production in the area. Whereas Central Asia hitherto had been considered to be a passive part in terms of drugs the region had now emerged as a more active player, which in turn altered the threat scenario. Hence, measures needed to be installed not only to hinder the pass-through of drugs to Europe, something that reiterates the concentric security framing of Central Asia as a buffer, but also to stop production and use of drugs in the Central Asian states.

This further complicates the security dynamics, as the Central Asian states are here seen as being a security risk by virtue of the countries' active partaking in the upholding of this problem. This is also important for another reason, as this also provided the EU with a

rationale for pursuing reforms inside Central Asia, in this case as a means to stop the drug production. This may help explain the emphasis placed on norms to supply the technical programs to address EU security concerns, underscoring that the normative and technical dimensions were not mutually exclusive entities in the EU Strategy, and that solutions to Central Asia's security challenges necessitated a comprehensive approach. This reiterates the perception of the EU and the West at large as a prime mover for Central Asia's security, and also supports the notion that Central Asia was being cared for by the West.

Summing up

The EU faced a complex security situation in Central Asia. As the different security threats required to be addressed in different manners, Brussels seems to have sought to overcome this by alternating between a framing of the EU-Central Asian security relationship as a security political community and Central Asia as a problematic area that turns it into a European buffer zone. Both of these aspects can be related in relation to viewings of the security threats related to Afghanistan: by containing threats inside Afghanistan, Brussels and the Central Asian states would be working together for the best of the region, and if the threats spread to Central Asia, the region needed to be isolated in order to stop it from causing further "contamination".

In practical terms Brussels centered its security involvement on border management and drug-related measures through already existing programs. The approach suggests that Brussels saw to improve the security situation by stabilizing the region through the use of Western security systems. The Central Asian countries were starting to become more actively involved in criminal activity, as seen from the fact that the region moved from being mainly a transit area for drugs to an active partaking in drug production. This reiterated the need to treat the region as a buffer zone, but also provided Brussels with an opportunity to enhance its normative engagement in the region, as seen from the various implemented programs' attempts to dissuade security breaches while at the same time make sure that Brussels appeared as the main facilitator of Central Asian security.

4.4. Central Asia in the EU's Energy Policy

Introduction

The EU has a “twin-track approach to cooperation in the energy sector” in the Central Asian and Caspian region (EC External Relations 2009; 2). One “track” is pursued through *regional energy dialogue*. The dialogue is administered within the framework of the so-called Baku Initiative which in turn is supported by the INOGATE program. Here, short, medium and long-term objectives for enhanced energy and transport cooperation between the EU and the other participating countries are put forward. The other “track” consists of *bilateral cooperation* which is based on the framework of the so-called *Memoranda of Understanding* (MoU). The energy cooperation memoranda “opens up the possibility of strategic energy partnerships with a special focus on energy security and industrial cooperation, development of the energy sector and improvement of the investment climate” (ibid; 2). We need to consider both the multi- and bilateral EU approach to Central Asia in order to construe a comprehensive depiction of the EU's view on Central Asia in terms of energy. Hence, we will here start by a general outline of Central Asia in the EU outlook, before we go on to examine the mechanisms through which the EU's objectives are pursued, that is, the “twin tracks”.

Mutual benefits: Limiting Russia's leverage

Ambassador Norbert Jousten, Head of the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan, noted that the EU's energy situation was not all rosy as he stated the following:

Our situation is straightforward. In the EU, our energy supplies are dominated by fossil fuels. Oil, gas and coal represent around 80% of energy supplies. More than 80% of oil and almost 60% of gas used in the EU is imported. Moreover, Europe's own production of fossil fuels is declining. It is also clear that despite the current economic crisis, and no matter how successful EU countries are in boosting renewable energy and energy saving, our levels of import dependence will grow (Jousten 5/10 2010).

The EU's increasing dependence on energy import in the coming years also creates the context for the Union's policies in Central Asia. Outlining the reasons for the EU's interest in Central Asia's energy resources, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner noted in a speech in September 2008 that

strengthening our energy partnership with Central Asia is a top political priority for the European Union. The region is central to our strategy of diversification of energy supplies and supply routes, a policy that is all the more pertinent after the events of this summer. The events in the Caucasus have given both Central Asia and Europe food for thought. The security dimension of our energy policies has been thrown into sharp relief. And, while we in the EU are intensifying efforts with regard to the security of our supplies, Central Asia also has a strong interest in diversifying its export routes (Ferrero-Waldner 18/9 2008).

First, we here see that Central Asia fulfills a double function in the EU energy strategy: as an area from which Europe could receive additional energy supplies and via new supply routes. This focus is logical given the expected increased EU import dependency. The strengthening of energy relations between the parts are here seen mutually beneficial, as Central Asia would also get another outlet for its energy resources. This last point is noteworthy, as in addition to the stated strategic goals of diversification certain geopolitical overtones come into play.

The recent “events” referred to should obviously be seen a reference to the Russo-Georgian conflict in August 2008. The excessive Russian use of military power in it’s the conflict showed both Moscow’s will and ability to play hard. In turn, this gave both Brussels and the Central Asian states “food for thought”, i.e. necessitating them to reassess and adjust their positions. In practical terms, this could be interpreted as a signal to the Central Asian states to reconsider their relations with Russia and their dependence on Russian transit, thus seeking new strategic alliances that were to counterbalance Russian influence in the region. The EU, presenting itself as having largely complementary interests to the Central Asian states, here promotes itself as one of those new strategic partners, supposedly sharing the energy interests with the Central Asian energy producers. This way, both the Central Asian states and Russia would be able to mark their distance to Russia.

Hence, the EU underlined that diversification of EU supplies combined with the diversification of export routes would be beneficial for both the EU and Central Asian energy producers. Expanding on this point, Ferrero-Waldner stated the following:

We intend to redouble our efforts to develop energy links between the EU and Central Asia through diversified energy transportation routes and new energy infrastructure, including Nabucco. Making a reality of the long-discussed "southern corridor" must be the focus of our work together in the coming months, and I hope that at our next Baku ministerial in late November we can give new impetus to the creation of a Trans-Caspian energy corridor (ibid.)

This way, and in relation to what we outlined above, we can here argue that the EU saw itself and Central Asia as having mutual interests in avoiding Russia to as large an extent as possible. This notion would also be found in the JPR, where it was stated that the Nabucco pipeline project was of “paramount importance for the diversification of energy supplies in both regions” (JPR 2010; 4). Hence, through the construction of the Nabucco-pipeline Russian energy leverage could at least partially be ended and at the same time bring the EU and Central Asia closer together.

Dependency

Satisfying both of these objectives stated above, Brussels continued to reinforce its efforts in the region. The EC stated that

Energy is a crucial area for the economic growth of the countries of Central Asia, which have requested assistance from the EU. A more secure and efficient energy supply, distribution and pricing policy are essential features for the sustainable economic and social development of the region (EC 2010b; 19).

Central Asia is here presented as being more dependent on energy than the EU, as the region’s resources are not primarily seen as being advantageous in itself, but rather as a means to achieve further growth. This creates an impression of Central Asia as being reliant on energy in order to progress within other fields. At the same time, this helps taking the sting out of Central Asia’s strong structural bargaining position as an energy producing region, as the regional states here are depicted as requiring assistance from the energy consuming EU to develop. This reiterates the overall framing we examined earlier. Hence, Brussels here frames Central Asia as being in a form of double dependency, between energy being the key to unlock overall development in the region, and the EU, which had the means to bring these developments about.

The regional approach

Brussels approaches Central Asia in terms of energy as a region. Outlining a rationale for this, the EC noted that “enhanced regional cooperation in the energy sector has been recognized as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic and social development, as well as contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region” (ibid; 19).

The framing of energy cooperation as a necessary precondition for socio-economic development in Central Asia reiterates the framing we saw above, and makes cooperation in this field appear as not only desirable but more importantly imperative and vital for further progress in the region. What is new here is the less technical approach taken as more focus is on the link between energy, peace and prosperity. The premise here is that by strengthening the regional energy approach, not only would Central Asia as a region gain substantially; this would also have positive domestic synergy effects for the participating states that went well beyond a mere development of the countries' energy structures. As to the actual energy cooperation, the European Commission noted that

The EU and its partners in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus have a mutual interest, as consumers, producers and transit States, in ensuring a stable and predictable framework for the flow of energy, including the modernization of existing energy infrastructures and the establishment of new ones (Market Observatory for Energy ; 3).

Connecting the three links in the energy chain, it is here an outspoken goal to establish a common framework for interaction for the whole energy structure, based on mutual interests. This would indeed satisfy one of the chief objectives Brussels has in Central Asia, which is the convergence of the energy markets “through the harmonization of the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks” (ibid; 1). This integrated energy complex would institutionalize energy relations on the basis of a common understanding of the possibilities and challenges related to energy, which in turn could be interpreted as not only a framework-convergence, but more importantly a normative convergence between the parts. Hence, the regional approach would not only contribute to the facilitation of Central Asian regional approaches to key energy issues, but also to create a common EU-Central Asian legal and normative space that would enable and facilitate energy cooperation.

That Central Asia occupied a very central and distinct role in this conceived EU framework could be seen from the following statement by the 2010 JPR:

Of particular value is the fact that the Central Asian countries participate in the Baku Initiative alongside Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to the East of the EU. This allows an exchange of experiences with these countries and contributes to the construction of a Central Asian regional energy market based on the principles of the EU's regulatory model and promoting the development of the necessary cross-border infrastructure (2010 JPR; 16).

This is in accordance with the stated INOGATE objective to achieve “approximation of legal and technical standards with a view to the creation of a functioning integrated energy market in accordance with EU and international legal and regulatory frameworks” (EC 2010b; 19). We can here detect a slight dualism in the EU framing. On one side, and in connection with what we saw above, the energy integration would imply that there was a common fundament or basis for the impending unification; in other words something to build further relations on. On the other, the statement outlines an asymmetrical manner in which to achieve just this, as it is the Central Asian markets that are to be integrated into the European ones and not a mutual process where the parts are to converge on the basis of mutual concessions and compromises. Hence, it seems possible to argue that it was European rules and regulations that were to constitute the foundation for the integration, meaning that it was Brussels that was to act as a supplier of terms and conditions. In turn, this focus suggests that Brussels sought to use its internal market as a template for dealing with Central Asia, meaning that expansion of the internal market was the means through which to approximate the Central Asian states (Youngs 2009; 105).

Furthermore, we see that promotion of “necessary” infrastructure was highlighted as an important feature within the regional strategy, by which we can deduct that the aid that were to be given to the Central Asian states, was of a technical character. In addition to this and in line with what we outlined above about the importance of energy for the development of Central Asia and the EU as a facilitator to bring these developments about, it could here be argued that the regional energy cooperation was based on a trade-off: European funding and investment for infrastructure in return for a guarantee of supplies to the European markets (ibid; 105).

The bilateral approach

Turkmenistan

Energy is one of the key strategic objectives in the EU’s dealings with Turkmenistan. Outlining its views on the situation within this field, the EC stated the following:

The energy sector is crucial to the Turkmen economy. Policy reform in this sector, enabling a comprehensive approach towards sustainable energy development at the country level, as well as promoting better use of energy resources, energy efficiency and reduction of energy loss will require a substantial buildup of national expertise across the board, from policy analysis to management skills to technical and scientific know-how and best practices (EC 2010b; 50).

Despite stating the importance of energy in the economic and thus also political structure of Turkmenistan, we can here detect a discrepancy between the perceived importance of the energy sector and the actual state of things within this field. The framing here suggests that Turkmenistan's energy sector is at best underdeveloped, something that obviously is problematic and ominous given the sector's centrality for policy makers in Ashgabat. Through cooperation with the EU these problems could be solved, hereby creating a modern and sustainable energy structure in Turkmenistan.

This would create a common platform upon which relations could be strengthened later on. Arguably, the need for creating more favorable conditions for strengthening ties within the energy sector also seems to be the main motive behind the entering of the EU-Turkmen Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as this would place EU-Turkmen energy dealings within a planned and mutually consented framework. Upon the signing of the memorandum, EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs stated that

Turkmenistan can be an attractive destination for EU investments for the development of new gas and oil fields, and at the same time, the EU offers an attractive consumer market for Turkmen energy products. The MoU signed today shows clearly how much both parties gain from a mutually beneficial and constructive energy relationship (Europa.eu 26/5 2008).

We can here detect a certain restraint in the EU's description of the relations, an indication of which is that Turkmenistan is framed as a *potential* rather than an *actual* attractive destination for EU investments. This can be read as a form of reservation on Brussels' part, signaling that reforms needed to be implemented in order to fulfill the Turkmen potential. At the same time, EU investments would bring Brussels and Ashgabat closer together, as the EU would gain influence through its investments, this way being able to affect the formulation of Turkmen energy policies. This was important in light of the increased attention Turkmen energy resources had gained over the past few years, the Turkmen-Chinese pipeline being a good example. Hence, the wish to gain influence should be seen not only as a means to gain power of definition in the bilateral EU-Turkmen relation, but also to hinder other powers in establishing themselves in Turkmenistan. This way, the EU framing could also be seen as having geopolitical connotations, something that also reiterates the Russian framing.

As to the content of the MoU we can note that the memorandum laid out two main directions of cooperation that were to be pursued: structural reforms through strengthened cooperation

on energy security and cooperation in enhancing industrial development (EC 2008a; 1-2). Combined, the implementation of the provisions outlined in the MoU would create stability and predictability by establishing mechanisms for forecasting energy demand and supply. Also, this would help attract investments into the Turkmen energy sector and facilitate exchange of methods. Apart from being a telling sign of Brussels' view on the deficiencies of the Turkmen energy structure, this also shows where the EU saw itself as contributing to mend just this. The EC stated:

This is an area where the EU could greatly contribute in support of the efforts of the Turkmen authorities regarding the modernization of the energy sector in line with sustainable long-term policies and environmental concerns, as well as in support of the EU-Turkmenistan Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Energy (EC 2010b; 50).

The EU here frames itself as a substantiating partner of the Turkmen energy modernization, this way adding weight and legitimacy to Ashgabat's efforts within this sphere. This underlines the perceived structural EU edge within this field, and shows how Turkmenistan would benefit from strengthened cooperation with Brussels. We should here note that the statement above does not point to any direct Turkmen dependence on the EU, but rather that Brussels' involvement would ease Turkmenistan's energy transformation considerably. Hence, the focus is on Brussels accommodating and assisting Ashgabat. The highlighting of advantageousness rather than sheer dependency should, as with the abovementioned focus on Turkmenistan's potential, be seen as means to attract Turkmen attention to cooperating with the EU, which shows the need for the EU to stand out in the crowd of potential partners. In turn, this highlights Turkmenistan's power at this point, rather than the EU's.

Kazakhstan

Outlining the scope of EU-Kazakhstani energy cooperation, Ambassador Norbert Joustén stated that there in large were three reasons for this partnership: mutual EU-Kazakhstani importance; diversification of export routes; and finally that the energy cooperation between the parts was both so well established and wide in scope that moving forward, i.e. strengthening the partnership, was necessary in order to "harness its full potential" (Joustén 5/10 2010). Obviously, this should be read as an EU signal towards bolstering its relations with Astana within the field of energy.

In line with this, it was important to frame the partnership as a mutually advantageous arrangement that created positive returns for both parts. The advantages that this arrangement generated to Astana were outlined by Jousten as “alternative export routes widen your market opportunities and will enhance your ability to obtain internationally competitive prices” (ibid.). The point about prices can be interpreted in a dual manner. First, this indicates that Astana did not get competitive prices everywhere, which seems to refer to the, in Brussels’ eyes, obsolete Russian pricing policy, which as we saw was due to Moscow’s until-recent transport control. Here we can also deduct a second point, namely that market diversification could be used as leverage vis-à-vis Russia, meaning that securing Kazakhstan’s energy supplies could be read as both a means to secure sufficient supplies, but also as a way to bypass Moscow.

Hence, it seems possible to argue that the benefits gained from the cooperation were different for Brussels and Astana respectively: the former would strengthen and diversify its energy supplies, whereas the latter would gain through economic and technical contributions and through getting a more direct access to the attractive EU energy market. This advantageous reciprocity was also clearly expressed by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, as he stated that “all this shows that Kazakhstan and the EU share an interest in the diversification of energy routes and an open investment climate. This is a win-win partnership!” (Barroso 26/10 2010). This way, the EU saw the strengthening and further development of the trade-off as the way to proceed in its future dealings with Astana.

Summing up

With increasing dependence on energy imports in the coming years, Brussels understood that a larger degree of interaction between the energy chains in order to maintain stable and secure energy imports. To this effect, Brussels also made sure that diversification was framed as a mutually advantageous endeavor, which was done by highlighting how EU-Central Asian cooperation would reduce both parts’ dependence on Russia: Central Asia would get another outlet for its energy resources, hereby securing the Central Asian states market access, whereas the EU would gain from a new inlet. In practical terms, Brussels sought to construe an energy political community, bound together through the integration of the separate energy markets and a common understanding of the framework of cooperation. As with the previous EU framings we have considered it was also here important for Brussels to present the Union

as a necessity for Central Asia's energy development, hereby seeking to place the EU in the center of Central Asia's energy policy orientation as well.

On a bilateral level, the focus may be said to be somewhat more nuanced, where the main emphasis was placed on how cooperation with the EU could be beneficial for the EU's counterparts. This serves as an illustration of the increased power of the Central Asian states vis-à-vis Europe, something that at least partially can be ascribed to the increased global interests in the countries' resources. Accordingly, due to the Central Asian states' enhanced geopolitical clout, the EU tread more carefully on a bilateral basis than on a regional one, so as to make Brussels a more attractive partner for the Central Asian states.

4.5.1. The EU Debate on Energy Security

EU and energy: Outlook and perspective

Outlining the importance of energy, the EU's Energy Strategy to 2020 opened by stating that "energy is the life blood of our society. The well-being of our people, industry and economy depends on safe, secure, sustainable and affordable energy" (EC 2010c). Being a major energy importer, securing sufficient supplies of energy is therefore vital for the Union. This even more so in light of volatile energy prices, the growing scarcity of fossil fuels as well as the growth of the energy-thirsty economies of India and China. Adding to this, increasing energy consumption in the coming years will also increase the EU's dependence on imported energy goods, a figure that may rise to a total of 66.6 % of consumed energy by 2030 (EC 2008b).

Due to this, it was clear that Brussels needed to take steps in order to ensure European energy security for the future. The pillars of the Union's energy approach have been stated in the Lisbon Treaty, consisting of ensuring the functioning of the energy market; ensuring security of energy supply in the Union; promoting energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy; and promoting the interconnection of energy networks (Lisbon Treaty, 2009). In addition to mark a wish to emerge as a leading international energy actor, the points above also highlights that energy concerns were a shared responsibility within the Union⁵⁸. In more concrete terms, the 2nd Strategic Energy Review,

⁵⁸ The stated need for the EU to "speak with one voice" was especially important in light of the fact that energy relations historically had been dealt with through bilateral deals between individual EU members and energy

officially named the *EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan*, stated that Brussels was to construe its energy agenda around the core objectives of *sustainability*, *competitiveness* and *security of supply* (Europa.eu 13/11 2008). In terms of the external EU engagement securing sufficient supplies is the most important focal point. In practical terms, it may be argued that Brussels has based this engagement on a bifurcated process, concentrated around the issues of *integration* and *diversification*. These will be addressed in the following.

Integration

Outlining the volatility of oil prices for both consumers and producers, the increasing distances between energy resources and customers as well as disruptions to pipelines and shipping, Benita Ferrero-Waldner stated that “cooperation is all the more important since energy security is becoming ever more complex” (Ferrero-Waldner 18/6 2009). This was also addressed by the EC which stated the following about the Union’s foreign energy dimension:

If it is to achieve its goal of secure, competitive and sustainable energy the EU must involve and cooperate with other countries, be they producers, transit countries or consumers. (...) At a time of vulnerability of imports, potential energy crises and uncertainty surrounding future supplies, the EU must make sure that it adopts measures and creates partnerships that guarantee the security of its energy supply (EC 2011b).

Hence, in light of Europe’s need to ensure *access to resources* it seems fair to argue that a focal point for just this was enhancing the Union’s interaction and cooperation with the other links in the energy chain. The practical EU response was to strengthen interaction by using the internal market *acquis* as its fundament for action externally. That this indeed was Brussels’ objective was also clear from the *Europe 2020* strategy adopted by the EC in 2010. It was here stated that “expanding the area where EU rules are applied will create new opportunities for both the EU and its neighbors”, and furthermore that this could help third party countries in anchoring their reform efforts (EC 2010c). In addition to noting the EU tendency to frame its efforts as a mutually beneficial exercise, we here see that EU rules and

suppliers. The fact that this has not been done in the past can partially be attributed to the fact that the various EU countries have various perspectives on what constitutes energy security, which makes it difficult for Brussels to unite the parts. The move from bilateral to multilateral energy relations would also have positive synergy effects in terms of augmenting Brussels’ external energy security, as the united EU would be more competitive vis-à-vis other players. The Energy Strategy also noted the need for this as it stated that “despite accounting for one fifth of the world’s energy use, the EU continues to have less influence on international energy markets than its economic weight would suggest” (EC 2010c).

regulations were to be exported, meaning that Brussels sought to extend the domain of the internal EU market structure.

This would foster integration through the interconnections of the various energy networks, hereby creating a common, harmonized and transparent market that plays by an EU-designed set of rules. By increasing the compatibility between the markets, Brussels could enhance its energy security through greater market flexibility to overcome unanticipated events, which could have great implications for both security of supplies and prices, as well as creating a larger degree of self-sufficiency within the structure. This could also help contributing to further increase Brussels' bargaining power with energy actors outside this structure.

Diversification

The Energy Strategy to 2020 stated that

For oil and gas, rising import requirements and increasing demand from emerging and developing countries call for stronger mechanisms to secure new, diversified and safe supply routes. As well as crude oil access, refining infrastructure is a crucial part of the supply chain. The EU is a strong geopolitical partner in energy markets and must have the ability to act accordingly (EC 2010c).

By diversifying its energy imports Brussels would satisfy two concerns related to supply security. First, this relates to avoiding too large a dependence on one single energy producer. The obvious example here is Russia. The previously mentioned gas conflicts with Ukraine undoubtedly helped bringing energy security high up on the EU agenda. Not only did the crisis uncover the vulnerabilities of the EU supply network; Brussels also read the events as manifestations of Russia using its energy resources to obtain political concessions. Hence, in order to avoid both future supply disruptions and giving Moscow too much leverage over Brussels, the EU sought to establish contacts with other energy exporters⁵⁹. Second, it could

⁵⁹ Commenting on the initiatives taken by the EU following the first Russo-Ukrainian incident in 2006, Benita Ferrero-Waldner stated that her priority as External Relations Commissioner had been to diversify energy sources and supply routes, "by developing the Commission's energy diplomacy with supplier, transit and consumer countries around the world" (Ferrero-Waldner 9/3 2009). This also highlights the interlinks between the two external energy processes of the EU.

be argued that the growing economies of such countries as India and especially China were seen as a challenge in itself as competition for resources would increase⁶⁰.

By establishing direct contacts with energy producing states the EU could here secure its import of non-renewable resources before these were being tied up by others. The need for diversification of supplies and routes has also been addressed in a recently released EC document, named *The EU Energy Policy: Engaging with Partners beyond Our Borders*. The document notes that the EU engagement in both the Caspian region and the Middle East should be adapted so as to reflect the regions' importance in a long-term EU perspective. In relation to this, the opening of the Southern Gas Corridor was named as a "key infrastructure priority" for the EU (EC 2011c; 5). Although not mentioned explicitly it seems natural that what is meant here is the Nabucco pipeline. This would help fulfilling both of the above stated objectives, as it would lead to the construction of infrastructure that circumvents Russia and gives Europe a new source of supply to complement its preexisting ones, meaning that the EU would diversify both sources and transport routes.

To this effect the EC adopted the Communication on security of energy supply and international cooperation in September 2011, which was the first comprehensive strategy for the EU's external energy relations. It was here stated that "the EU (...) must build on the strength of its market, expanding links between the European energy network and neighboring countries and creating a wider regulatory area, beneficial for all" (EC 2011b). Another point can be extracted from the adoption of the strategy, as the newly-released strategy serves as an illustration that the EU's external energy actions so far has been more of a theoretical character than a practical, meaning that it remains to be seen whether something is to be done, and, if so is the case, if this in congruence with the presented plans.

Summing up

From the preceding pages we have seen that ensuring sufficient supplies in order to counter the ever-increasing dependence on exports is the main issue for the EU's external energy engagement. This also meant that Brussels was forced to outline practical steps to move upon in order to be prepared for just this. Internally, that is, inside the EU, the main measures taken

⁶⁰ Echoing this the EC's 2020 Energy Strategy stated that "global energy markets are becoming tighter, with developing Asian countries and the Middle East accounting for most of the growth in global demand. As the world's largest energy importer, the EU is likely to be more vulnerable to supply risks as a result" (EC 2010c).

were the promotion of the interconnectivity of infrastructure, energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energy sources. Externally, we saw that Brussels promoted energy market integration and diversification as the main vehicles for guaranteeing EU energy security. The next subchapter aims at examining the role Central Asia played in satisfying these objectives.

4.5.2. Central Asia's Role in the EU Energy Security Understanding

The EU is a global actor in terms of its economy, but it is far from self-sufficient in terms of energy to fuel this economy. In turn, this makes the EU a large-scale energy importer. In this context, and as can be seen from the tables below, Central Asia is important as one of the areas from which the EU can buy the required energy resources. As we saw above, the EU's practical engagement to overcome this problem has been centered on two points, namely integration and diversification. We will in the following see how and why this is important in relation to Central Asia.

Figure 5: Central Asian and EU proved natural gas reserves⁶¹

	At the end of 2009	At the end of 2010	
	Trillion Cubic Meters	Trillion Cubic Meters	Share of World Total
Kazakhstan	1.9	1.8	1.0 %
Turkmenistan	8.0	8.0	4.3 %
Uzbekistan	1.6	1.6	0.8 %
Total Central Asia	11.5	11.4	6.1 %
Netherlands	1.2	1.2	0.6 %
Poland	0.1	0.1	0.1 %
Romania	0.6	0.6	0.3 %
UK	0.3	0.3	0.1 %
Total EU	2.2	2.2	1.1 %

Figure 6: Kazakhstan and EU proved oil reserves⁶²

	At the End of 2009	At the End of 2010	
	Thousand Million Barrels	Thousand Million Barrels	Share of World Total
Kazakhstan	39.8	39.8	2.9 %
EU	6.2	4.7	0.4 %

⁶¹ Data for both tables retrieved from BP (2010).

⁶² Although both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also possess some oil reserves these are modest; each constituting a share of less than 0.05 % of the global total. Due to this, they have been omitted from the index.

Integration

The EU sought to expand its internal market structures to also include external ones. Central Asia was obviously one of the targets for this approach. By including Central Asia, that is, an energy producer, the EU would naturally strengthen the EU's bargaining power by having several links within the energy chain cooperating in a common framework. In turn, this would increase the EU's competitiveness, which we also saw was an EU aim, against actors that stands outside the integrated EU energy structure. This seems to be especially pertinent in relation to Russia, as this hopefully would discourage Russia from using energy as weapon to achieve political concessions from others. Moreover, and in relation to this, the infrastructural interconnectivity between the parts in the structure would make Europe more resilient to "energy emergencies", whilst also give Central Asia increasing market shares in Europe. This way, the EU-Central Asian energy integration could be framed as a mutually beneficial endeavor: stable supplies in turn for stable demands. Furthermore, as the proposed structure would be based on EU norms and regulations, expanding the EU energy market to Central Asia would give Brussels another avenue through which to introduce European norms in Central Asia.

Diversification

Next, the goal for EU was to increase the number of routes, sources and types of energy that flowed into Europe. Central Asia would play a role for the EU in fulfilling the first two of these objectives. This has also been the rationale behind the proposed Nabucco-pipeline. Moreover, and equally important, the construction of Nabucco would lessen the EU's dependence on Russian energy, hence further decreasing Moscow's energy leverage over Brussels. Hence, Central Asia would here serve as an EU counterweight to Russia.

Chapter 5: Energy Security and Central Asia: Cooperation, Competition or Confrontation?

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine how Russia and the EU frame Central Asia in their discourses on energy security. The research question has been approached by examining four aspects, using a matrëshka model: the parts' foreign policy framings; security policy framings; energy policy framings and finally their energy security framings. The theoretical presupposition the thesis is based on has been that energy security means different things to different actors, depending on how they define their interests and objectives. Other elements that had to be taken into consideration were current political and economic circumstances, and the impact the identity of the parts has had on the way they have approached those issues. All those elements seem to have affected the representations and framing of the parts. This chapter seeks to sum up the findings of the thesis, and to discuss whether the situation can be described as developing in the direction of cooperation, competition or conflict.

Summing up the findings

Foreign policy

The first aspect we considered was the foreign policy framing of the parts. In the case of Russia, two aspects were dominant. First, Moscow placed an emphasis on the fact that Russia is by far the most powerful actor in the region. This way, Moscow framed itself as the “big brother” in its relations with Central Asia, which in turn allowed Russia to act as the prime mover in its relations with Central Asia. Russia framed itself as being a supplier and facilitator of stability in the region, hereby implying that Central Asia indeed was dependent on such support from Moscow in order to keep afloat. Second, the Russo-Central Asian relationship was depicted as being the result of centuries of interaction. By highlighting the common history, heritage and civilization that had emerged between the parts, Russia framed the relationship as being nearly historically determined. Thus, the cultural closeness between the parts led Russia to frame its relationship with Central Asia as somewhat of a union between parts that share the same historical experiences.

The EU, on the other hand, has centered its foreign policy involvement in Central Asia on two dimensions; a normative one and a technical one. Starting with the former, Brussels framed Central Asia as underdeveloped, lacking the proper normative foundation, i.e. Western ideals,

necessary to achieve substantial progress. The EU portrayed itself as a Central Asian benefactor, helping the region in overcoming its backwardness by “exporting” democracy, human rights etc. This way, Brussels framed its presence in Central Asia as sheer necessity to achieve development in the region, and consequently that Central Asia would be rendered helpless. This also seems to be the underpinning of the latter of the EU’s foreign policy dimensions, namely the technical one. By promoting development projects within a rather wide variety of fields, Brussels could strengthen its position in Central Asia, hereby illustrating in practical terms how Central Asia could benefit from closer relations with the EU. However, the EU engagement did not result in very concrete results. One could here argue that this suggests that the EU focused more on pursuing own interests rather than on reforms inside Central Asia.

Security policy

The Russian possession of “local knowledge” also propagated to the Russian framing of the security situation in the region. Central Asia’s interests were here framed as being best preserved by solving the region’s problems locally, that is, through regional organizations in which Moscow had a dominant position. It should here be underlined that the security threats in the region were seen as having not only regional but also supraregional character.

However, by framing the security challenges in the region as best managed through regional security solutions, Russia secures its position in the region by acting as a regional security facilitator. This would allow Russia to secure Russia by securing its “zone of influence”, while also hindering “foreign” actors’ involvement in the region. This last point was however not set in stone. This can be seen from the fact that Russia displayed a differentiated Central Asian security framing vis-à-vis other actors: Against the West, CSTO were pointed out as the main security institution, hereby highlighting that Moscow saw military measures as the best way to counter an increased Western security presence in Central Asia. Towards the East, the SCO was promoted. Through its main emphasis was on socio-political and economic issues, Russia probably treated it also as a way of controlling China’s increasing presence in the region. Thus, Moscow sought to present the Russo-Chinese co-operation as beneficial for both parts, and, not least, for the Central Asian states.

On its side, Brussels sought to frame the EU-Central Asian cooperation on security as a security union. However, parallel with Russia, Brussels also sought to address security issues

in Central Asia so as to avoid them to grow and thus also spill over to Europe. This way, Central Asia was simultaneously framed as both part of the solution *and* part of the problem. This also provided the Union with a way to promote its normative side: by adhering to Western-made security mechanisms Central Asia could gain in a two-fold manner; getting rid of its security problems and approximate the EU.

Energy policy

In terms of energy policy, Russia sought to legitimize its presence in Central Asia by pointing to the strong position of Russia in the global energy structure. In turn, Central Asia was portrayed as being to a large degree structurally dependent on Moscow in terms of energy. An example of just this is the Soviet pipeline system, which naturally also increased the importance of Russia in the Central Asian states energy policies. However, Central Asia's powers were increasing, something that also was reflected in the Russian framing of the region. In practical terms, this manifested itself through increasingly more business-like relations, illustrating that Moscow needed incorporate the interests of the Central Asian states into the Russian energy considerations. Moscow's goal can perhaps be seen as two-fold: tying up Central Asian gas in Russian deals, hereby securing Russia's market shares and preventing Central Asian producers from competing with Russia on the most attractive markets; and in the prolongation of this, establish Russia as a Euro-Asian "power bridge". Consequently, Russia needed to frame these points as beneficial also for the Central Asian states; hereby moving from a focus on projecting interests in Central Asia through *power*, to using an *incentive*-based approach. Illustrating this, Moscow promoted the creation of a Russo-Central Asian *Eurasian*-energy community as a part of the common economic space that was to give Russia an additional clout in the post-Soviet space.

In the case of the EU, EU-Central Asian energy cooperation was framed as a mutually beneficial endeavor. First and foremost, this would help both parts reduce their dependence on Russia, albeit in different ways: the EU would gain from getting a new area to import energy from, whereas Central Asia, by dealing directly with Brussels, would gain from having guaranteed market access to the EU, whilst also circumventing Russia, thus establishing itself as an increasingly independent global energy actor. To implement this, the EU promoted the introduction of a common regulatory framework for the EU and Central Asia. Not only would this create a common understanding of the issues at hand; this could also allow Brussels to

promote its normative fundament. This way, energy cooperation, if not to say integration, was framed to have overall positive synergy effects for the Central Asian states.

Energy Security

The Russian energy security discourse was mainly centered on three issues. The first of these was market integration. This would ensure that Russia had markets to which Russian energy products could be exported, something that in turn was essential in order to secure Russian market shares on the international energy market. Indirectly linked to just this, the second point highlighted in the discourse was the need for investments in the Russian energy sector. Finance was needed to develop new energy fields as well as maintenance on the existing infrastructure, both of which were necessary factors if Russia was to keep its strong position on the international markets. However, Moscow remained until recently wary of letting foreigners into the Russian energy complex. The last point was the question of export diversification. Russia sought to lessen its export dependence on Europe, thus leading Moscow to pay more attention to the East. This is however not to say that Europe was becoming unimportant in the Russian outlook: new pipelines, the Nord and South Stream, were either under planning or even construction. This was done to avoid transit of Russian gas through other countries but also to check the Nabucco-pipeline, which was to circumvent Russia. This would have the double advantage of both avoiding transit states that may potentially be troublesome for Russia, whilst also give Russian energy several outlets.

Central Asia was framed as having a place in two of these three aspects, namely market integration and diversification. By promoting integration with the Central Asian states Russia could retain a certain degree of control over the Central Asian states' energy policies. This would allow Russia to create a fundament for coordination of energy matters, and could perhaps also help Russia in influencing the same states. The establishment of a Russo-Central Asian energy framework would allow Russia to use its multiple positions in the energy chain alternately. The second point was as we saw above related to diversification. The point here was to direct the Central Asian scope of attention elsewhere than Europe, so as to keep the Russian market shares in the valuable EU market. The Asian market was seen as sufficiently large for both parts, meaning that Moscow's diversification effort was both a matter of securing markets for itself and also to hinder competition over markets with the Central Asian energy exports as far as possible.

The EU's energy security understanding revolved around primarily two objects: integration and diversification. The former of these meant expanding the internal EU market structures, this way also including external actors. This focus on transparent market rules and networks would strengthen Brussels, as it would increase access and availability of energy resources to the EU. Moreover, by interlinking energy infrastructure the Union would become more resilient to possible supply disruptions. In terms of the EU's diversification efforts, these were mainly related to attempts to establish new routes, seek to include new energy suppliers and finally to promote different energy types. All these three factors can be seen as having the same fundament in the EU energy thinking; as too large dependence on any one of these would constitute an energy security risk. Central Asia played a role in both of the EU concerns. By integrating the Central Asian energy producing states into the EU network Brussels could formalize and institutionalize energy relations with the region.

Consequently, this would turn Central Asia into a stable supplier of energy to the EU, and the EU into a stable market for Central Asia. Moreover, the EU-Central Asian energy structure could become a counterweight to Russia, hereby seeking to "calm" Russia down. Related to these points, Central Asia was also an alternative for Brussels as a possible area of diversifying EU energy imports. This would enhance EU security of supply and Central Asian security of demand, while also lessening the parts' respective dependence on imports from (the EU) and exports to and transit through Russia (Central Asia).

Energy realities and patterns of interaction

Our main focus in this thesis has been on two actors' – Russia and the EU – understandings of Central Asia's role in solving their energy dilemmas. In light of what we outlined above, it seems tempting to argue that both Russia and the EU seek to control the Central Asian energy resources, but with different strategies and for different reasons. However, realities must also be taken into consideration, which have been reflected through the framings of the respective parts. As we dealt with earlier, Øystein Noreng has noted that energy relations principally can take three forms; cooperation, competition or confrontation. Theoretically speaking, this means that we in principle can be dealing with a total of nine different interaction patterns among those three actors – Russia, the EU and Central Asia. However, as we saw above, the respective parts' discourses make some scenarios more and other less probable. In praxis, this means that some interactional patterns have crystallized, which may point to different future

development directions, whereas others must be considered less plausible. We will in the following look at some of these.

Before starting, it should be noted that the energy situation in Central Asia at this point is rather opaque, meaning that there are many open-ended questions that still remain unanswered. An example of this may be Kazakhstan's and Turkmenistan's bargaining game between different actors, which have yet to see a definitive result. A change in this situation, for instance a Turkmen commitment to the EU-promoted Nabucco-pipeline would completely change the situation in the region. Thus, due to the complex and nebulous situation, this is not an attempt to predict future developments in the region, or to make the case for any one scenario. Rather, we will see how the coinciding and competing interests between the parts that we tried to identify by looking at those parts' respective energy discourses on Central Asia *may* develop in relation to Central Asia, and to point out plausible and less plausible scenarios.

In terms of the resource bases of the respective parts it can be argued that the Central Asian energy resources mean widely different things to Russia and the EU respectively. Russia, being massively superior in terms of resource bases to both Central Asia and the EU, has in principle enough resources both for own consumption and to export. However, due to required investments, costs associated with extraction and maintenance, and, not least, lack of available Russian funding for this, Moscow prefers to import the necessary energy from Central Asia. This suggests that the Central Asian resources basically have a *strategic* meaning for Russia.

The EU on the other hand, is becoming increasingly more dependent on energy imports, and thus consequently also on external energy actors. This weakens the EU's bargaining position. In order to secure the well-being of EU citizens, as well as sustaining economic development; it is therefore becoming increasingly important to secure sufficient volumes of energy "abroad". Because of this, it may be argued that the Central Asian energy resources carry a more *fundamental* meaning in EU thinking, meaning that Brussels also has higher stakes in ensuring supplies from Central Asia than Russia. Hence, we here see that not only interests, but also bargaining position plays a role in the determination of interaction patterns in the energy complex.

As we have seen from the previous chapters, both Russia and the EU have sought to establish cooperative relations with the Central Asian states. In relation to the energy strategies we have outlined, this seems to make the option of either Russo-Central Asian or EU-Central Asian energy *confrontation* counterintuitive and thus much less probable. A Russian move in this direction would most likely be interpreted as another attempt from Russian authorities to use energy, albeit in a different way, to put pressure on other players. This could put the Russian market shares in risk, as other actors would seek to avoid energy interaction with and increased dependence on Moscow. As to the EU, this notion also seems strengthened from the fact that confrontation with energy exporters would seriously weaken Brussels' international standing, especially in light of the growing global demand for energy. This may make it even more difficult to obtain the necessary supplies. Moreover, military intervention in Central Asia by either parts would probably be responded to by other players, perhaps most notably the US or China. In turn, this could endanger the energy security of all parts. Hence, it may here be argued that cooperation and competition are the two most important strategies in relation to Central Asia.

Moving on, Noreng has noted that "basic features of the oil and natural gas markets give strong incentives to suppliers not to compete indiscriminately for market shares, whereas cooperation among the many buyers is difficult" (Noreng; 214). First, this may be interpreted as an argument in favor of an increasing degree of future energy cooperation between Central Asia and Russia. By coordinating their efforts on the international energy markets, they reduce the risks of oversupplying the markets, which in turn may drive prices down. This may also be the very reason why Moscow promotes the Eurasian energy exporting union. The obvious Russian interests in the European market may perhaps best be safeguarded by coordinating Russian actions with Central Asia, and preferably guide the Central Asian states towards the Eastern markets, where Moscow seems to think there is room enough for both actors. Hence, although Russia and Central Asia have competing interests as energy exporters, in the sense that securing market shares for themselves is the most important objective, the expanding Asian market makes competition between Russia and Central Asia unnecessary.

This is also noteworthy in another sense. As Russia also is an energy importer from Central Asia, this means that they have both coinciding interests as exporters, as well as competing ones as importer and exporters. In light of Noreng's statement, as well as the Russian framing

examined earlier, we may argue that Central Asia is more important for Russia as a fellow energy producer rather than as a region for Russian energy imports. This suggests that Russia indeed highlighted the coinciding interests it had with Central Asia, rather than the conflicting ones. This may substantiate the claim about increasing future Russo-Central Asian cooperation, which also may gain weight from the long-standing historical relations between the two parts. At the same time it should not be forgotten that the two parts also have complementary interests as importer and exporter of energy. Thus, closer bonds with Central Asia could have the positive spill-over effect of securing Central Asian energy imports for Russia.

Second, as cooperation between buyers is less probable, this in turn also decreases the likelihood of a Russo-EU coalition of buyers. In principle the parts have compatible interests in the sense that both wish or need energy supplies, but in practical terms this transforms into conflicting interests as they in effect are competing for the same resources in Central Asia. Moreover, should such a coalition emerge, it should not be forgotten that Central Asia could reorient themselves, primarily towards China, and in the longer term also India. China has indeed taken advantage of the infrastructural opening of Central Asia in the past few years. As was seen in the previous chapters, it may be argued that Beijing is indeed the one player that has made the most headway in Central Asia during this period, as illustrated by the Turkmen-Chinese pipeline opening in 2009.

The EU has, as we have seen, sought to engage Central Asia through a holistic approach that highlights cooperation and interdependence. In energy terms, the rationale behind this approach is, in Noreng's words, to "offset energy dependence with more comprehensive economic relations", hereby incorporating energy into an overall package (ibid; 224). It might here be argued that Brussels hopes that this in time can develop into a more structured cooperation relationship between the parts, which can be illustrated by the EU's promotion of the Nabucco-pipeline. This also seems logical as the parts have complementing interests as producer and buyer of energy. Moreover, this would establish a common stance against Russia, hereby seeking to limit Russia's energy power. In this sense, it might be argued that the EU efforts to enhance cooperative relations with Central Asia might lead to more competition between Brussels and Moscow, as they both strive to become the dominant part in the region.

However, it might be fitting to ask how a possible EU-Central Asian energy relationship might look like in practical terms. As we saw above, the EU's bargaining position vis-à-vis Central Asia is weakening as a result of the Union's increasing import dependence. This may jeopardize the comprehensive EU approach, as Brussels due to this may be incapable of carrying it out. One might therefore argue that the EU faces a dilemma and will have to choose between ideas and more material interests: human rights and democracy inside Central Asia, or ensuring energy supplies to the EU. The stated EU conditionality, that is making cooperation and assistance dependent on internal reforms, seems to be in serious difficulties, as Central Asia easily can reorient towards either Russia or China, which do not attach these types of demands to their business dealings. Moreover, the lack of progress within this field over the past few years also indicated that the Central Asian states themselves were, and still are, unwilling to accept the conditions posed.

Concluding remarks

As has been shown in this thesis, Central Asia's energy resources are subjects to considerable attention from many different actors. This creates an overall picture that is complicated and multifaceted, which in turn makes it difficult to present any definitive conclusions. We can however point out a few lessons that are determinant in this form of interaction. First, we have seen that Russia's and the EU's understandings of Central Asia can indeed influence the parts political choices, as they create possibilities that can be acted upon. Second, coinciding interests, perceived or factual, make cooperation more probable. Thus, in order to understand political choices we must take into consideration not only representations of things as they are framed in political discourses but also realities on – and in the case of energy resources – under the ground. Third, although Central Asia mostly is being seen as one region, attention must also be paid to distinct national features, if not say mentalities. In this case we have for instance seen Kazakhstan pursues a much more extrovert foreign policy than Turkmenistan. Fourth and finally, it seems as birds of the same feather indeed flock together. Russia and Central Asia are both energy exporters, have a long shared historical relationship, and are also somewhat similar in terms of regime types. However, this situation can change quickly, meaning these points are by no means set in stone. Central Asia is firmly placed high up on the international political agenda, and will in all likelihood stay there in the foreseeable future. Thus, this story will indeed be continued.

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